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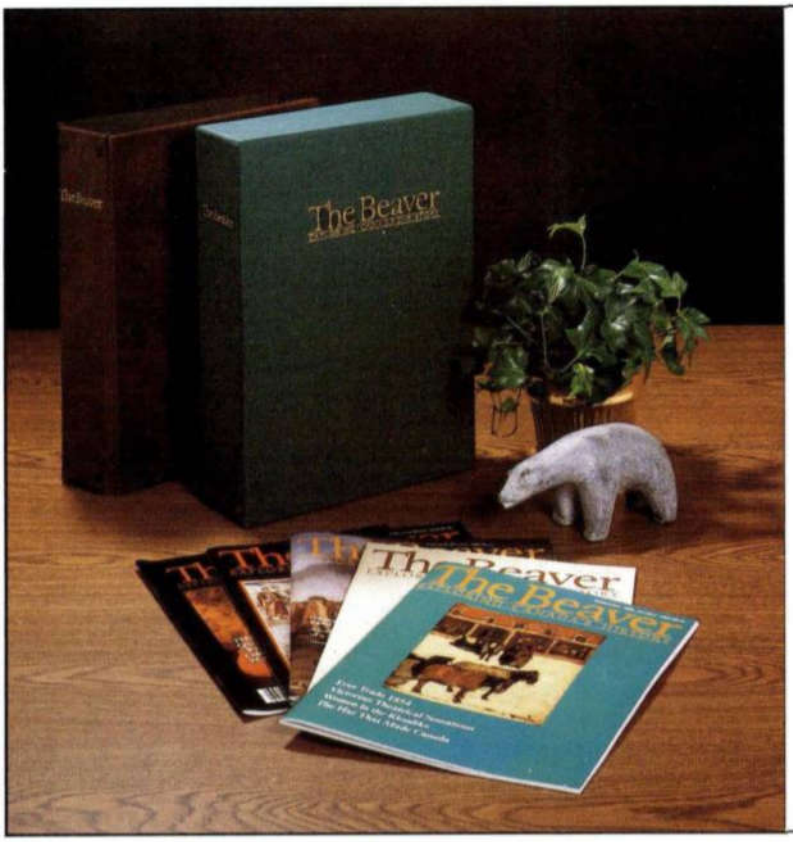
Undefeated:
300 Years of Native History

Canada's Hero of the Light Brigade

A Mid-Winter Gallop, 1840



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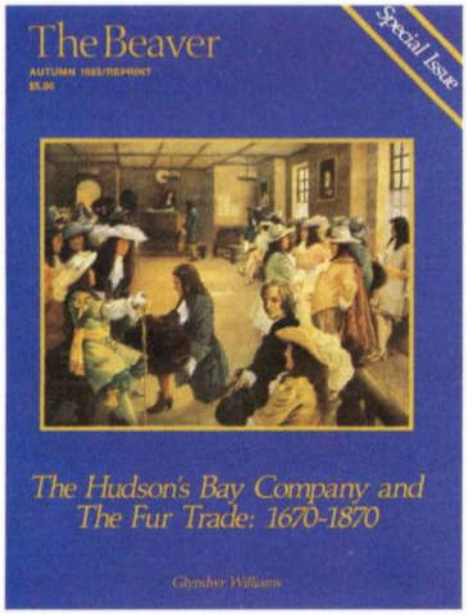

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND THE FUR TRADE 1670-1870

By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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Canada and the Fur Trade

A milestone of a sort was passed in February of this year when the Hudson's Bay Company announced that it would close fur departments in its major retail stores across Canada. Fur coats have not sold well in recent years and the decision was made to put valuable store space to better use. It was, as editorialists across the country rushed to point out, "the end of an era".

It was, indeed, a rather long era. The Hudson's Bay Company first took an interest in furs toward the end of the seventeenth century and the Company obtained its charter from Charles II in 1670 in order to monopolize the trade in the region around Hudson Bay.

Down the years fur has been an important commodity to the Company and the decision to stop dealing in fur was not taken lightly or, one suspects, without a degree of nostalgic regret.

It is a demonstrable fact, however, that the Hudson's Bay Company did not endure for over 300 years on sentiment and nostalgia. Commercial concerns survive by facing reality and the Hudson's Bay Company, throughout its long and frequently highly profitable history, has striven to adjust its policies and activities in the light of changing conditions.

Over the centuries the HBC has been a fur company, a land company, a shipping company, a supply company, a land transportation company and a retailer. For a period in its history it governed its vast land holdings like a principality. It kept the peace and maintained the laws. It survived and prospered by changing with the times.

There is a widely held belief that the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to close a small number of surviving fur departments in selected stores across the country marked its abandonment of the old fur trade as established over 300 years ago by Radisson, Groseilliers, Prince Rupert and the rest. In fact, the Company ended its direct involvement in the fur trade in the 1980s.

In 1987, in the face of difficult economic conditions, the Hudson's Bay Company elected to concentrate its efforts in a few areas of commercial activity, including its department store business. At that time the Northern Stores division was sold and now operates independently as the Northwest Company. With the Northern Stores went the Company's fur trade operation in the Canadian North. Fur auction houses owned by the Company in Europe and North America were also sold off during the late 1980s, thus terminating the Company's direct involvement in its original activity.

When the Hudson's Bay Company decided to leave the Canadian North in order to concentrate on its retail interests and other activities in southern Canada, the charge was made that it had "abandoned its history", although it might be argued that history cannot be that easily disposed of. The past is fixed, inviolable. History is like our shadow; we may not be aware of it all the time, but it is always there and we cannot escape it. Even if the Hudson's Bay Company ceases to exist at some improbable future date, its history will endure as long as records are kept in the HBC Archives in Winnipeg and as long as Canada is concerned about its own history, which is, to a rather remarkable extent, the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. (It is no accident, after all, that Canada's symbolic animal is the hardy beaver or that this magazine of Canadian history is called *The Beaver*.)

Far from abandoning its past when it concentrated its efforts in what it felt to be its main areas of activity, the Company was demonstrating that it has learned from its long experience that survival is an art and that a company concerned about its future is more likely to have an unfolding history to look back on.

At various stages in its history the Hudson's Bay Company has adapted itself in order to survive and grow. When competition threatened its monopoly in the eighteenth century the HBC moved inland, opening areas to the south and west to trade. At the time of the Napoleonic wars, with the fur markets of Europe inactive, the Company looked about for other ventures to tide it over, including the timber trade (see *The Beaver*, February/March 1991). In the later nineteenth century, after the Rupert's Land monopoly came to an end, the Company was active in transportation and land sales.

During World War I, when the fur trade was in eclipse, the Company played a major role in wartime shipping, holding important contracts with the government of France.

As this century advanced, the fur trade played a diminishing role in the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company was one of many involved in the trade, but its role as a storekeeper increased as the century moved on.

The first public sale of furs by the Hudson's Bay Company, Garraway's Coffee House, London, 1672. From a painting attributed to Edward North.

The Hudson's Bay Company was founded on purely commercial considerations and commerce remains its chief activity to this day. But, unlike many commercial concerns, the Company, in its 321 years, has played an important role in the development of the northern portion of North America.

Company men mapped vast areas of the North and West and opened them to transportation, trade and, eventually, settlement. For a long period it supplied the North and maintained its links with the outside world. Its activities touched almost every part of Western Canada and many important present-day Canadian cities — including Winnipeg, Edmonton and Victoria — began as links in the chain of HBC trade.

The Hudson's Bay Company pioneered air transportation and radio communications in the northern hinterland. Company ships served and assisted the growth of northern communities. It all began with the fur trade, but it became, in time, far more than a simple exchange of goods and furs.

Today there are a number of conflicting views on the old northern fur trade. Some see it purely as a business that once generated large profits and which might, if handled properly, do so again. Some see the fur trade bathed in a romantic glow: "men against the wilderness", etc. Some see it as the promoter of exploration and progress and it is true that the pursuit of fur fostered such dramatic and historically important events as the journeys of Samuel Hearne and John Rae. The fur trade did have its romantic aspects and it did often lead to adventure and discovery.

Others deplore the fur trade, pointing out that it involved the wanton destruction of fellow creatures and the plundering of nature. Still others argue that it created a dependency in some native peoples and interfered with their old manner of living so that now, with the fur trade almost extinguished, they are left bereft.

Whatever our view of history, the past remains unchanged and unchangeable, heedless of our praise or blame. Time moves on and things change.

It may seem to some observers that the Hudson's Bay Company has lost something by leaving its rich and dramatic past behind, but the Company exists and has existed for all of its long history, in a constantly changing world. Its present activities as storekeeper to the nation may seem mundane when compared to the adventures of Henry Kelsey or James Knight; the present governor driving through Toronto in a taxi may seem an unromantic world away from Sir George Simpson with his great canoe and his piper, but the fact remains that we all live in a different way today; it is a changed world and we must adjust to it. It is the only one we have.

The Company of Adventurers long since entered a new era and a new phase of its long existence. But there are men still alive who travelled by dog team for the HBC and lived in the afterglow of a romantic past. That history and their great contribution to the development of Canada endure in spite of change. Nothing has been abandoned; nothing can be taken away. The Hudson's Bay Company is no longer in the fur trade. History continues to unfold. The past lives on and casts its light into the future. ♦

—Christopher Dafoe

Canada's Forgotten Hero

By H. M. Weedle

On a late October morning in 1854, the clear urgent notes of a trumpet sounded the order to advance. During the minutes that followed a young Canadian cavalry officer in combat for the first time battled his way to glory in the immortal "Charge of the Light Brigade".

As the trumpet call echoed and faded in the surrounding hills of the Crimea, the Light Cavalry Brigade advanced along the North Valley at Balaclava. Responding to the familiar call, the six hundred and seventy men of the Brigade rode into history in the most tragic and heroic cavalry action of all time. The Canadian, Alexander Dunn of Toronto, was a troop officer with the Eleventh Hussars, and fought with such distinction that he earned the highest award for bravery in the British Army. For his valour on that fearful day at Balaclava, Queen Victoria presented him with the Victoria Cross.

Alexander Dunn was born in Toronto on 15 September 1833 and was the younger son of John Henry Dunn, Receiver General of Upper Canada. The family home where Alexander spent his boyhood was built in 1820-21 by his father, then newly arrived in Canada from England. Located in what is now Richmond Street, just west of Spadina Avenue, the house was part of a large estate surrounded by extensive grounds and gardens in a secluded neighbourhood of fine homes. Alexander attended Upper Canada College and finished his education at Harrow. Although just an average student, he was a good athlete and an excellent rider. By early manhood he had become a formidable swordsman as well as a crack shot with both rifle and revolver. Like many big men, he was easygoing and of a kind and considerate nature.

On 12 March 1852 John Henry Dunn obtained a commission for his son Alexander as a cornet in the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own). The regiment, which was then commanded by the Earl of Cardigan, was considered to be one of the most prestigious in the British Army. Although commissions were normally purchased at the time, it was also necessary for a prospective officer to be accepted by the regiment. Dunn, coming from a wealthy and influential family, was regarded as socially acceptable; furthermore, he was a most impressive looking man, of tremendous strength, and standing six feet, two inches in height. He was headstrong and courageous, and at the age of nineteen gave every indication of becoming a splendid officer. Two and a half years later, he was to prove himself in one of the bloodiest cavalry charges of all time. Shortly after Dunn's appointment to the 11th, the regiment embarked for service in Ireland, where it remained until the outbreak of the Crimean War.

Clashes between Eastern Orthodox and Western Christian sects in the Holy Land became Russia's excuse for the invasion of Silestria and the destruction of the Turkish fleet. Emperor Nicholas announced that he was declaring war on all enemies of Holy Russia, and his invasion was to punish Christians in the territories in the Balkans for the crimes of Western Christians in Bethlehem. Britain and France, in support of their "friend" Turkey, retaliated by declaring war on Russia. The underlying reason for hostilities, which governments felt need not concern the general public, was the weakness of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, and the resultant vacuum and imbalance in power in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the presence of Russian troops beyond their traditional borders, posed a threat to both Britain and France, encouraging these two unlikely allies to join forces in order to protect their vital sea routes and bases in the area.

Following the declaration of war on Russia, the armies of Britain and France assembled in the Eastern Mediterranean, where they were joined by Turkish forces; the combined fleet then sailed through the Dardanelles. Dunn's regiment, in concert with the other regiments of the Light Cavalry Brigade, had sailed from Kingstown, Ireland, in early May 1854 to join the fleet.

After the allies landed at the Black Sea port of Varna, British and French troops had little contact with the enemy, except for a few minor skirmishes. The Turkish Army, on the other hand, operating under the guidance of several experienced British officers assigned from the Indian Army, routed the Russian invaders, forcing them to withdraw to Russian territory. Faced with this development, the allies, after much delay, agreed to invade the Crimea. Their objective

of the Light Brigade, 1854

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred,
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!' he said;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson

had now become the capture and destruction of the great harbour-fortress of Sevastopol.

Friday, 25 October 1854, began as a raw misty morning in the Crimea. To the group of French and British officers standing on the edge of the high plateau overlooking the hills and valleys north of Balaclava, there was every indication of a tough day of fighting ahead. At dawn, a powerful Russian force had converged on the eastern approaches to the Balaclava Plain, threatening the exposed flank of the British force. The plain, lying between six and seven hundred feet below the plateau, was about three miles long, from east to west, and two miles wide. A ridge, known as the Causeway, running from east to west divided the plain into the North and South valleys. This ridge was of vital importance; it formed a natural barrier above the port of Balaclava, and it carried the Woronzoff road which served as the main British supply route.

The watchers on the heights, facing east, were looking along the line of the Causeway Heights and down the length of the North and South valleys. Behind them lay the harbour-fortress of Sevastopol, which their troops had under siege. On their right front they could see the tiny harbour of Balaclava, the British base and lifeline to the sea. To strengthen the natural barrier of the Causeway, six earthworks had been constructed and fortified with 12-pounder naval guns, manned by Turkish crews. These fortifications, known as "redoubts", were numbered from one to six. The Number One Redoubt, which was the most isolated and vulnerable, was located on a feature known as Canroberts Hill. With the main British force deployed above Sevastopol, only 400 men of the 93rd Highland Regiment, 100 "invalids" (walking wounded), and a battery of field artillery could be spared for the defence of Balaclava. The Cavalry Division was held nearby in reserve.

For Dunn and his comrades in the Light Brigade, the frustrations of the past week, and in particular this Friday morning, were almost too much to bear. Every British unit had been in action in the Crimea except for the cavalry division, and only this morning the Heavy Brigade got its chance. Dunn was aware of the Russian advance from the east, the early capture of the first four redoubts and the subsequent threat to Balaclava. By half past ten o'clock, two Russian attacks against the port of Balaclava had been repulsed. The first attack by cavalry was stopped and routed by the 93rd Highland Regiment with artillery support, under the able command of Sir Colin Campbell near the village of Kadekoi. The second attack, this time by a larger group of cavalry, was routed by the Heavy Brigade under Brigadier General James Scarlett at approximately the same location. (This was the great charge of the Heavy Brigade, which has been sadly eclipsed by the disastrous Light Brigade charge shortly afterwards). The Russians now began to consolidate their forces on the Fedoukine Hills and the Causeway, in preparation for an expected allied counter-attack.

Watching from the high plateau, Lord Raglan, the aged Commander-in-Chief, had a bird's-eye view of the battlefield. Unfortunately, he failed to consider

Previous page: An 1862 sketch by George Thomas shows Dunn in the forefront of the charge in an image from the collection of the National Archives of Canada. Below: The charge, from a lithograph after a painting by William Simpson.

that those in the valley below did not have the same advantage. As the enemy consolidated on the surrounding heights, a staff officer informed Lord Raglan that Russian gunners were attempting to remove the British naval guns from the forward redoubts. The two infantry divisions Raglan had ordered down earlier from above Sevastopol were not yet in position, and determined to save the guns, he decided to use his cavalry without infantry support.

There was a stir of activity on the high plateau above the Balaclava Plain, as the Commander in Chief issued instructions. Lord Raglan's famous fourth order, written by General Richard Airey, the Quartermaster General, was as follows:

> Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, follow the enemy and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troop Horse Artillery may accompany. French Cavalry is on your left. Immediate.
> R. Airey

The order was first handed to Captain Thomas Leslie, the next duty officer on call, but at Lord Raglan's request was passed to Captain Edward Nolan. Just as Nolan was about to ride over the precipice, Lord Raglan called out to him: "Tell Lord Lucan the cavalry is to attack immediately".

With Raglan's last words uppermost in his mind, Nolan rode at breakneck speed down the rocky escarpment, and twenty minutes later handed the message to Lord Lucan, Commander of the Cavalry Division. To Lucan, down in the low ground, the message was meaningless. What front were they talking about? And as for guns; the only guns he could see were at the end of the valley and pointing directly towards his troops. Nolan, frustrated by Lucan's procrastination, and laborious reading of the order, spoke sharply: "Sir, you are to attack at once", he said. Lucan glared at him: "Attack, attack what sir?", he shouted, in bewilderment. Nolan merely waved his arm down the valley, saying, insolently: "There, my Lord is your enemy; there are the guns". Those nearby felt that Nolan deserved to be placed under arrest immediately for insubordination. Lucan, however, merely shrugged his shoulders, but seething with anger and frustration, turned and moved away to issue orders to his brigade commanders and staff. Meanwhile, Nolan was granted permission to ride with the Light Brigade, and joined his friend, Captain Morris, who, this morning, was in command of the 17th Lancers. At eleven o'clock, the Light Brigade moved to the west end of the North Valley.

Dunn had waited all of his life for this moment. Since he was a boy in Toronto he had wanted to be a soldier, and today he felt that he would finally get his chance. This would be his first time in action against

National Archives of Canada

Colonel Alexander Roberts Dunn, V.C., in mufti.

the enemy, and mixed with his feeling of excitement was a twinge of anxiety, for only two thousand yards ahead was a twelve-gun Russian battery drawn up wheel to wheel across the narrow gap near the end of the valley. Behind the guns, a huge concentration of Russian cavalry waited, while infantry supported by artillery lined the hills on both sides of the valley. At the last moment, Lucan in his usual fussy and interfering way, and without consulting with Cardigan, decided to narrow the Brigade front; he moved the 11th Hussars from the front line back to form the second line, placing Dunn, with some of the most reliable men, on the left flank to protect and cover the advance. Glancing about quickly, Dunn noted the formation of the Light Brigade: the first line included the 17th Lancers on the left and the 13th Hussars on the right; Dunn's own regiment, the 11th Hussars formed the second line, and directly behind the Lancers; the third line was formed by the 4th Light Dragoon Guards on the left and the 8th Hussars on the right of the line. Each of the regiments was drawn up in two ranks and the interval between the lines was four hundred yards. The Brigade strength was down from the original 1,250 to only 670, because of cholera and dysentery.

As Dunn and the others watched, Major General, The Earl of Cardigan, Commander of the Light Cavalry Brigade, mounted on his charger "Ronald", rode to his position in front of the brigade. With sabre drawn,

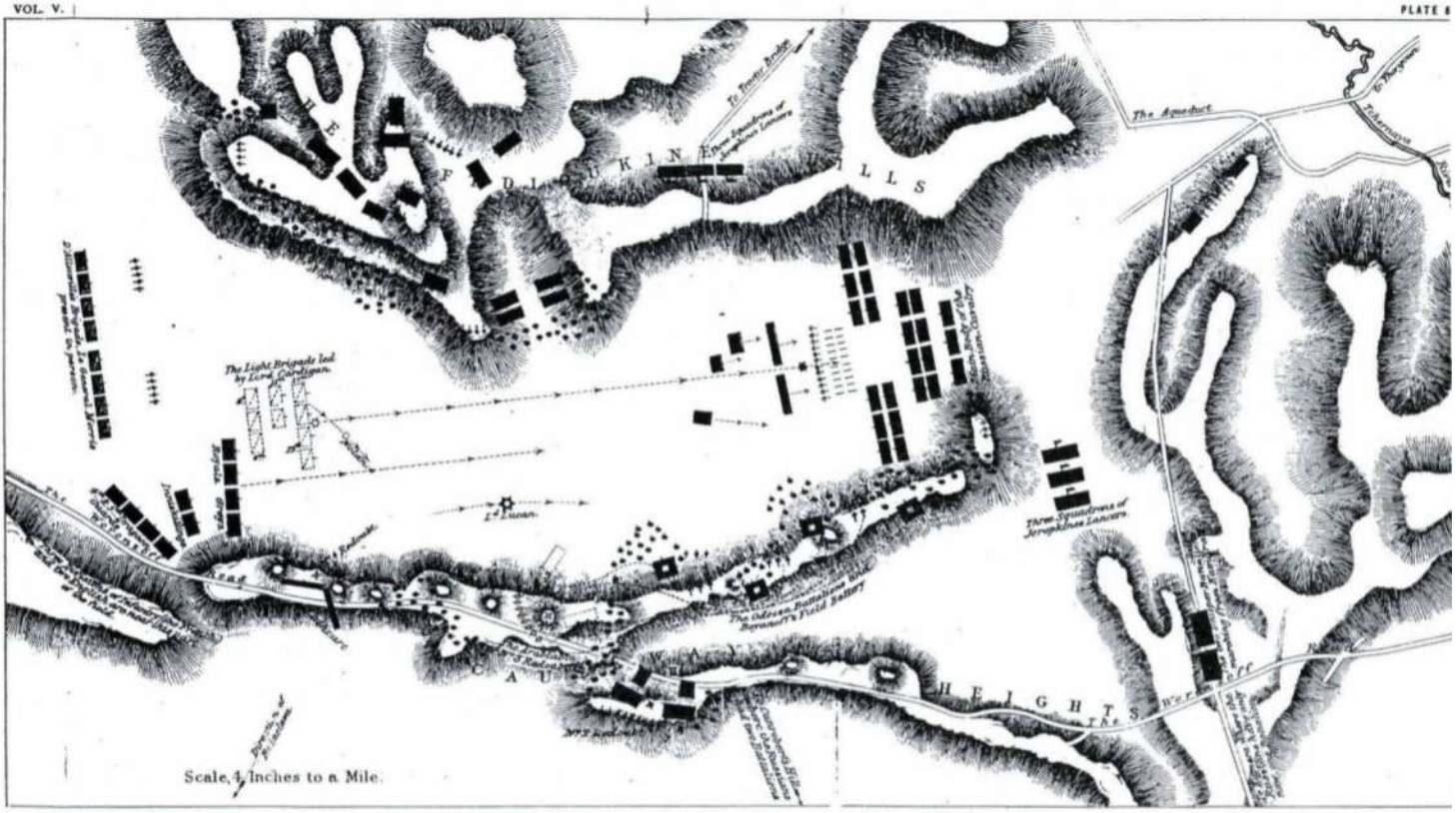
VOL. V.
PLATE
The Aqueduct
The Light Brigade led by Lord Cardigan.
Three Squadrons of Scarlett's Lancers
Three Squadrons of Scarlett's Lancers
Scale, 4 Inches to a Mile.

Diagram of the charge from a nineteenth-century account of the battle. Dunn is in the second line with the left hand squadron of the 11th Hussars. Arrows show the advance to the guns. Nolan's path is shown crossing in front of Lord Cardigan.

he sat quietly looking straight to his front, as final adjustments were made in the ranks behind him. At ten minutes past eleven o'clock, speaking in his loud, hoarse voice, Cardigan gave the order: "The Brigade will advance. Right squadron of the 17th Lancers will direct". Trumpeter Brittain automatically sounded the "walk-march", and Dunn later remembered feeling his heart pounding and the hair standing on the back of his neck as he eased his charger forward. At a nod from Cardigan, the trumpeter sounded "trot" and the pace quickened: they were now heading straight down the valley.

As the Light Brigade moved off, an eerie stillness fell over the battlefield. All artillery fire had momentarily ceased and only the faint jingle of curb chains and bits could be heard as the horsemen advanced at the trot. The sun had by now pierced the early morning mists, and the watchers on the heights could identify individuals in the ranks below. The silence continued for the first one hundred yards, for even the Russians could scarcely believe their eyes as the squadrons advanced in perfect formation. When the Russian artillery and infantry opened fire, they did so almost hesitantly at first; then more rapidly and with greater accuracy as the gunners and infantrymen found their range. An artillery shell exploded to the right of Cardigan and just in front of the 17th Lancers, and Dunn saw a horse and rider wheel away to the right and back through the ranks of the 13th Hussars, the body upright in the saddle and sword arm raised. When the body fell, someone near Dunn said it was Nolan, the aide, who had delivered the order to advance. How ironic, Dunn thought later, that the officer who delivered the order should be the first man to die. Many of those present believed that Nolan, realizing his mistake, had actually started across the front of the brigade, and was trying desperately to direct Cardigan and his troops to the Causeway, seconds before he was killed.

With all guns firing, round shot swept through the ranks, while shells burst overhead and amongst the squadrons, wreaking havoc on men and horses. The spectators on the heights had expected the Brigade to swing right and up along the Causeway slope. When it became obvious that through some colossal blunder or misunderstanding, they were continuing right down the valley, the watchers were appalled. Hardened soldiers turned pale and some wept as they watched helplessly. A distinguished French officer, standing on the heights, remarked: *"C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas le guerre"* ("It is magnificent, but it isn't war.") Cardigan, meanwhile, was so angry that he could think

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Dunn (seventh from left, back row) is pictured with brother officers at Malta in 1864

of nothing but what he believed was Nolan's insolence in riding across his front, and his attempt to take command of the brigade. It never crossed his mind that Nolan might have been trying to save the brigade.

At another nod from Cardigan, Trumpeter Brittain sounded the "gallop", and seconds later fell from his horse, mortally wounded. Under withering fire from front and flanks, the Light Brigade, now facing annihilation, quickened pace instinctively. In their race against death, they rode straight for the guns at the end of the valley. Dead and wounded men and horses littered the valley floor, forcing the second and third lines to leap over the carnage or to swing around the fallen as they, the survivors, thundered past. As gunfire swept the lines, whole sections fell, leaving great openings in the ranks. Dunn and the other officers and N.C.Os called out to the men to: "Close in", in order to fill the gaps and to maintain some semblance of order. Dunn, at one point, found himself surrounded by wounded and riderless horses threatening to take him down, and had to use the flat of his sabre to drive them off. The Russian gunners fired a salvo at a range of seventy-five yards and the front line charged through the smoke and blinding flashes. Seconds later, Dunn and his troop rode through the right end of the gun position, striking down those who had survived the assault by the depleted first line.

Lieutenant Colonel John Douglas, Commanding Officer of the 11th Hussars, with only three surviving officers, including Dunn, led his regiment, now reduced to eighty, to a position behind and clear of the guns. All was now confusion, for no orders had been given for action beyond the Russian guns. Furthermore, Lord Cardigan was nowhere to be found (Cardigan had already ridden back). Seeing a mass of Russian cavalry directly to their front, Douglas formed his troops in line and called out: "Give them another charge, men. Hurrah!" For a moment the Russains held, then they turned and broke away, riding back towards the Tchernaya River, where they re-formed in a ravine. The 11th had followed, but by this time their horses were so exhausted that to attack without additional support would be futile. Looking about, Douglas saw lancers to their rear and was elated thinking they were the 17th; then he realized that they were Russian. Seeing the hopelessness of their situation, he shouted: "Every man for himself now." The remnants of the 11th, with a few officers (including Lord George Paget, the brigade second in command) and men from other units, turned, and in a rough semi-circle faced the lancers. With the best horses to the front and centre, they made their last desperate charge. Riding stirrup to stirrup, with their heads close to their horses necks, and sabres at the guard position, they headed straight for the lancers. When the lead riders reached the lancers, the Russians gave way, allowing them to pass through their ranks; then as the weaker horses started through, the lancers closed in and attacked from both sides, as the British tried to fight their way out. Some fell, but others fighting desperately, broke through the Russian ranks.

"At this moment I particularly noticed the gallant bearing of Lieutenant Dunn", wrote Sergeant Major Lloyd Smith of the 11th Hussars. "He was a fine young fellow, standing 6 ft. 3 in. and mounted on a powerful horse, and wielding a terrific sword, many inches longer than regulation: his heroic conduct throughout the affair inspired all around him with courage. He saved

National Archives of Canada

A hectic moment during the charge of the Light Brigade with the 17th Lancers at the gallop.

the life of Sgt. Bentley, when surrounded by Russians, cutting them down right and left". Before the fighting ended, Dunn again charged and saved another man, Private Levett. (Unfortunately Levett's rescue was short lived, for he was killed within minutes).

The long trek back through the now deserted guns and along the desolation of the valley had begun. Struggling along with injured and wounded, they dragged themselves across the very ground over which they had ridden less than twenty minutes before. Lord George Paget, who remained with the 11th, described the retreat thus: "What a scene of havoc was the last mile, strewn with the dead and dying and all friends". Those struggling back saw their old comrades, "some running, some limping, some crawling". They saw horses from their regiment, "in every position of agony, struggling to get up, then floundering back again on their mutilated riders". The arrival of the French cavalry on the Fedoukine hills during the charge had silenced the Russian guns on that flank, and the presence of the Heavy Brigade, which Lucan kept in reserve and had the good sense to halt early in the charge, now provided some assistance and cover to the survivors of the Light Brigade. Although still under fire from the Causeway and being attacked here and there by the Russian lancers, the straggling remnants of the Light Brigade were no longer a worthwhile artillery target. As a result, firing now became sporadic, giving the survivors a chance to get back to safety.

Out of the 670 horsemen who rode down the valley, 198 returned and were present for roll call. Dunn's regiment had paraded that morning with 110 all ranks and at sunset could muster only 25, including Dunn. Out of the 670 horses ridden in the charge, almost 500 were killed or had to be destroyed. As a result of these losses, by the afternoon of 25 October 1854, the Light Cavalry Brigade had ceased to exist as an operational unit in the Crimea.

Love affairs between young single officers and married women were not uncommon in mid-Victorian times, and even Dunn's affair with Rosa Maria Douglas, while unusual, would in all probability have run its course and, in time, been forgotten, had it not occurred in the desolation of the Crimea. Living under canvas in the field provided little privacy for lovers, and indiscretions when they occurred were exposed for all to see. Dunn had fallen in love with his commanding officer's wife and shortly after the charge of the Light Brigade had taken place, Rosa Maria asked her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Douglas, for a divorce in order to marry Dunn. John Douglas, who had been married for twelve years, refused. Whether Douglas knew about the affair up to this time is uncertain, but after his wife's request, Dunn's status in the regiment changed. A troop leader's vacancy, which resulted from a casualty at Balaclava, was given to an officer who had not ridden in the charge. Dunn protested, but was told that he was too young for the responsibility. The story leaked out and the British press took up Dunn's cause, claiming that a regimental favourite was given preference over a hero who had proved himself at Bal-

aclava. Under these circumstances, Dunn requested permission to resign his commission. The request was at first refused, but in early 1855 permission was granted and Dunn and Rosa Maria Douglas eloped from the Crimea and went to live in Dunn's home in Toronto.

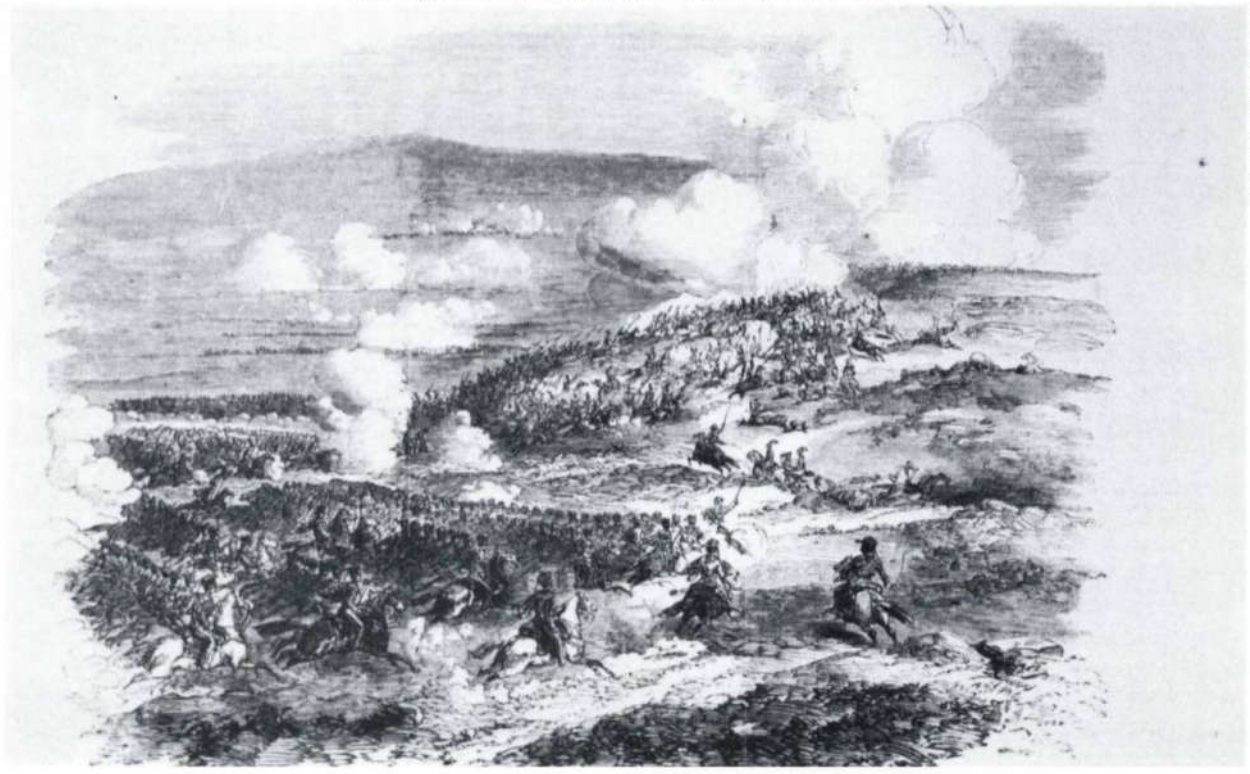
For the next two years Dunn, and presumably Rosa Maria, lived quietly in Toronto; but on 26 June 1857, almost three years after Balaclava, Dunn was present and on parade at Hyde Park London for the first great Victoria Cross parade and investiture. Sixty-two officers and men, including Dunn, standing shoulder to shoulder, irrespective of rank, were decorated by Queen Victoria before a huge and distinguished company. The queen, mounted on her charger, stooped from her saddle to pin the decoration on the breast of each one of England's heroes. Commanding the cavalry that day was none other than the indomitable Lord Cardigan, who led the final march past through at a thundering full gallop. To the madly cheering crowd, it was a salute to the charge of the Light Brigade. For the moment at least, recriminations about who blundered were forgotten.

The great parade and investiture served another purpose also, for the Indian Mutiny was at its peak and troops were urgently needed throughout the British Empire. The enthusiasm generated at Hyde Park sparked a recruiting drive that reached even to Toronto, for when Dunn arrived back in his native city he had with him the authority to raise an infantry regiment in Canada.

The 100th Regiment of Foot (The Prince Regent's County of Dublin Regiment, also known as the Leinster Regiment), had sailed from England for service in Canada in 1805. After serving in Quebec and Ontario, the regiment fought in the War of 1812-13 with distinction and suffered heavy casualties. In January 1815, the remnants of the 100th were re-formed as part of the 99th Regiment of Foot, and in 1818 this regiment (which included the 100th) was disbanded. Fighting on the Canadian/American frontier had ended in 1814, with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, and the end of the Napoleonic Wars brought a lasting peace. Most of the veterans took their release in Canada and became settlers with land grants in the Ottawa Valley area.

In 1857 the Horse Guards approved the re-formation of the old 100th as an Imperial regiment to be raised in Canada, with the title "The Prince of Wales Royal Canadians". Dunn got a hero's welcome when he arrived home in Canada with his Victoria Cross, the first ever won by a Canadian. His fame coupled with his magnetic personality drew recruits to the colours, and in spite of the difficulty encountered in

The Charge, as seen by an artist of the "Illustrated London News".



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Dunn's grave at Senafe, Ethiopia.

recruiting soldiers in Canada at that time, Dunn succeeded in filling the ranks with the required 400 men. With regimental training well under way, Dunn and a fellow officer escaped from the social pressures and obligations of Toronto life, leaving for an extended hunting trip in the "Rockies". In the mountains, they lived with trappers and woodsmen, while hunting bear and moose. It would seem that by this time, Dunn's affair had run its course, or was about to do so. The only mention made about his personal life appears in the regimental history of the 33rd Regiment, which merely states that he had "other adventures" during this time. Whether Dunn appreciated it or not, the cloak of Victorian respectability had been cast over his "indiscretion".

The regiment sailed for England in late 1858 under command of Colonel Baron de Rottenburg and was posted to Aldershot. Dunn, who never held the rank of captain, had been commissioned as a major and was appointed second in command. While in Aldershot, Dunn received a singular honour when he was presented with the sword of General Wolfe, which had been uncovered on the Plains of Abraham. Almost immediately after this ceremony, Baron de Rottenburg resigned his commission and Dunn was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel to succeed him. Dunn was now commanding an infantry regiment at the age of twenty-seven, and in spite of his earlier transgressions, was back on track in his military career.

In 1864 when the 100th was posted to Malta, Dunn became a full colonel, making him the youngest in the British Army. While in Malta, Dunn's only brother John, a subaltern in the regiment, died of fever, leaving Dunn heir to the family estate. The sadness at the loss of his brother, together with the inactivity of garrison life in Malta, drove Dunn to take action: he transferred to the 33rd Regiment (The Duke of Wellington's Own) then stationed in Poona, India. He was made second Lieutenant Colonel, but soon after, was appointed first Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment.

When his regiment was placed on active service, and chosen to form part of the Abyssinian Expeditionary Force under General Napier, Dunn was elated. One night, however, when having dinner with a friend, a strange thing happened. During their conversation, Dunn said: "I am going to be killed. I shall never see England again". He apparently mentioned this premonition again after landing in Abyssinia and this time added: "It will be soon now". Did Dunn wonder why he had survived the Charge, when so many others had fallen, or did he feel that his luck had run out? Or was he, as his preoccupation might suggest, suffering from depression and possibly drinking more than usual? The answer, unfortunately, lies buried with him in the desert. In spite of his personal problems at that time, his friends said he soldiered on as always. Then, on the morning of 25 January 1868, Dunn set off with the regimental surgeon and two native bearers on a hunting trip. Eventually the officers became separated, and as Dunn and his bearer paused to get a drink from Dunn's flask, an accident occurred. According to the investigation, as Dunn tried to replace the stopper on his flask, his gaiter caught on the trigger of his hunting rifle causing it to fire. The shot tore through Dunn's upper right chest and he was dead before his servant could return with the surgeon.

His funeral was held two days later and as he lay in his coffin, fellow officers, following an older custom, cut locks from his hair. A friend writing to Dunn's sister in England said: "In no regiment was ever a commanding officer so missed as the one we have so unhappily lost — so perfect a soldier, so fine a gentleman, so confidence-inspiring a leader. He was a friend and felt to be such by every man in the regiment. The regiment will never again have so universally-esteemed a commander".

On 27 January 1868, the day he was buried in a small cemetery in Senafe, amongst the rugged hills of

"The Valley of Death", Roger Fenton's haunting photograph of the battlefield, 1855.

Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), the special correspondent for the *Times* wrote: "I found Senafe on my arrival yesterday full of a terrible tragedy which cast a gloom over all the camp. One of the most popular and promising officers attached to the Abyssinian force, Colonel Dunn, V.C. of the 33rd Regiment had two days before shot himself — the whole army has sustained a heavy loss in the death of Colonel Dunn. He was the youngest colonel in it and his career had already given sufficient promise of distinction to justify the belief that the highest military appointments were within his reach. In the ever memorable Charge of the Light Brigade, he won the Victoria Cross, conferred on him by the unanimous vote of his comrades. Though a strict disciplinarian, he was greatly beloved by his soldiers and all under him".

A visitor to the tiny cemetery at Senafe today could find the old grave where Dunn is buried. The site is neat and tidy and the plain headstone quite legible.

Since the Victoria Cross was instituted on 29 January 1856, it has been awarded to only 1,348 individuals, throughout the old British Empire. Alexander Dunn, the first of 93 Canadians to win the award, set the example for future generations. Following in Dunn's footsteps, Canadians from all walks of life, and representing every region of this great land, reached beyond the bonds of human frailty, to achieve the almost impossible. For their selflessness, devotion to duty, and conspicuous bravery in the face of death, they were each awarded the Victoria Cross. They came from fine homes and humble cabins, for amongst their ranks were men of wealth and importance as well as the poor. When the last of Canada's 93 Victoria Cross winners has passed away, and the tradition is but a memory, Alexander Dunn will still hold a special place as Canada's first son to be honoured with the most coveted and famous of all military decorations. ♦

Major H.M. Weedle served as an infantry officer in the Canadian Army (Regular) as well as in the Militia during the years 1950 to 1973. On leaving the service he joined the Ontario Workers Compensation Board, where he remained until his recent retirement. The Crimean War is one of his major interests.

A romantic view of the Weller stage coach on a winter night, from a painting by E.J. Dinsmore.

A handsome, young, bachelor governor general; a flamboyant, Yankee-born stage coach line proprietor; a thousand pounds in wagers and a wild, mid-winter gallop from Toronto to Montreal were all ingredients in the process of bringing about the union of Lower and Upper Canada.

In February 1840 Mr. Charles Poulett Thomson, Governor General of British North America, was winter-bound in Toronto, yet it was absolutely vital to his plans to get to Montreal in a hurry. The Toronto harbour was frozen and navigation on Lake Ontario was closed for the season. The only communication link with Montreal was 360 miles of icy, snow-covered road snaking through the sparsely settled wilderness along the north shore of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Poorly maintained by statute labour grudgingly provided by settlers, the road was frequently blocked by impassable snow drifts in stormy weather and flooded out during thaws. Stage coaches mounted on sled runners periodically travelled the route but the service was notoriously uncomfortable, unreliable and, sometimes, dangerous. The journey from Toronto to Montreal usually took five or six days and the standard of overnight accommodation and meals provided along the route was often unspeakably low.

The alternatives to stage coach travel were to either undertake the trip on horseback or on snowshoes. Even for those familiar with the route it was easy to go astray, get caught in a blizzard, drown attempting to cross a flooded creek or suffer a fall from a horse. In such circumstances, the traveller could freeze to death before help or shelter could be found. Another peril was the possibility of running into a Yankee raiding party. Several such raids had occurred and more were anticipated. Scarcely more than a year had passed since Prescott had been attacked.

The governor general was no coward, but he was something of a dandy who loved his creature comforts. The thought of freezing for five or six days riding in a bucketing, unheated coach appalled him and he quickly dismissed the idea of attempting the journey on horseback or on foot.

How then was he to get to Montreal?

Unlike previous governors general, Thomson was neither a famous general nor a member of the aristocracy. Instead, he was a practical businessman. The son of a well-to-do, middle class merchant, he had been privately educated and had worked for several years in Russia in the St. Petersburg office of his father's firm before returning to England to enter politics. There, he represented Dover in the British House of Commons from 1826 to 1830 and Manchester until he was appointed Governor General in 1839. He had a reputation for being astute and resourceful and one lesson his business experience had taught him was that almost anything is possible provided a sufficient reward

A mid-winter gallop from Toronto to Montreal in February 1840

WELLER'S EXPRESS BEATS THE ODDS

By George McElroy

is offered. He, therefore, announced that he would pay a sum of one hundred pounds to anyone who would guarantee him a safe trip to Montreal in reasonable comfort, taking no longer than two days *en route*.

All Thomson's friends and advisors were quick to assure him that such a feat would be impossible. The trip would necessitate an average speed of almost seven and a half miles an hour non-stop. Changes of horses would be required every fifteen miles or so. That would mean a minimum of ninety-six horses in relays along the route at the various change houses. Then there was the matter of driver fatigue. Driving a four-horse team over bad roads in winter is hard work. Several relief drivers would probably be necessary. Everyone agreed that the whole idea was folly.

Everyone, that is, except William Weller, the colourful, enterprising proprietor of the Weller Royal Mail Coach Lines and the foremost coach line owner in Upper Canada. Without hesitation, he accepted the governor general's challenge, provided he be allowed time to make all the necessary preparations for the journey. He also offered to bet all comers on his ability to successfully complete the trip within the time limit. As the news spread, it generated great excitement. In a very short space of time the stage coach proprietor made wagers which, if he won, would net him about a thousand pounds.

Weller, at this time, was a legend in the transportation business. Born in Vermont about 1798, he had moved with his family to northern New York State by 1820. There, he married and began to study law. By 1825, he had moved to Cobourg, Upper Canada, and established himself as a lawyer. In 1829 he purchased the Toronto to Kingston stage coach line from Jonathan Ogden and, in partnership with Hiram Norton, he operated a twice weekly service between the two communities. The Toronto depot for the line was in the Coffin Block at Front and Wellington Streets where the Gooderham Building now stands. As new routes were put into service, they branched out in all directions from this point.

A year later, in co-operation with another line owned by Mr. H. Dickenson of Montreal, Weller offered a five times weekly Toronto to Montreal service. By 1832, he was the sole proprietor of the Toronto to Kingston line and he also bought the stage line running north on Yonge Street to Holland Landing. Three years later, he was offering winter service between Toronto and Hamilton with a branch line from Dundas to Niagara. He also offered tri-weekly service between Cobourg, Port Hope and Peterborough. According to historian Madelein Muntz, Weller's great-granddaughter: "By 1837 Weller was the acknowledged king of land transport whose well-established fleet of brightly coloured Royal Mail Line coaches ran from Niagara to Montreal. At his Cobourg base he also operated repair shops and a carriage factory."

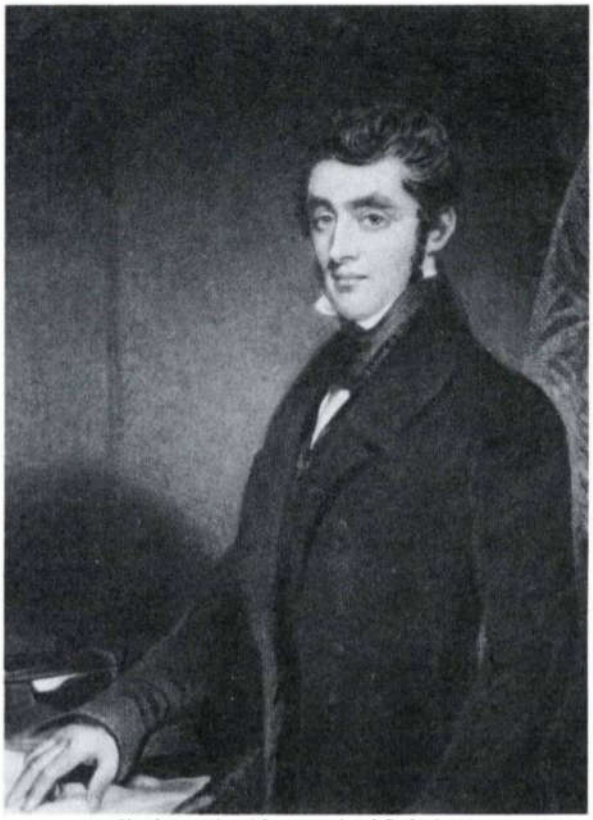
Mrs. Anna Jameson, wife of the Attorney General of Upper Canada in 1837 and author of a book entitled *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*,

William Weller in middle age, a pen drawing by George McElroy, based on an old portrait.

wrote a vivid description of a Weller coach arriving in Oakville: "While I was reading the mail coach between Hamilton and Toronto drove up to the door and because you should understand what sort of thing a Canadian mail is, I must sketch it for you. It is a heavy wooden edifice about the size and form of an old fashioned lord mayor's coach placed on runners and raised about a foot from the ground, the whole was painted bright red and long icicles hung from the roof.

"This monstrous machine disgorged from its portal eight men creatures all enveloped in bear skins and shaggy dreadnaughts, and pea jackets and fur caps down upon their noses, looking like a procession of bears on their hind legs, tumbling out of a showman's caravan. They proved, however, when undisguised, to be gentlemen, most of them going up to Toronto to attend to their duties in the House of Assembly."

Weller's historic, record-breaking, express trip to Montreal with the governor general as passenger, began on 18 February 1840, and most of the population of Toronto turned out to see them off. The coach line proprietor had decided to drive the coach himself and he now sat proudly up on the box waving to the crowd. When all was ready and with the governor general safely aboard, Weller cracked his whip over the heads of the restless horses who strained against their collars and quickly broke into a trot. The crowd cheered as the massive coach began to slither easily along the icy, snow-crusted surface of Front Street heading for the Kingston Road.



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Charles Poulett Thomson, Lord Sydenham.

Although Weller had hoped to drive the entire distance himself, the ordeal proved to be beyond even his remarkable strength and endurance. The only chance he had to rest his arms and relax his fingers from their grip on the reins was when the horses were being changed. Even so, he had almost reached his final destination when he found he could no longer continue and a relief driver had to take over for the final lap of the journey. Nevertheless, the entire distance from Toronto to Montreal was covered in the remarkable time of thirty-five hours and forty minutes.

The governor general was delighted. Not only had he reached Montreal in record time but he had done so in relative comfort. In addition to a bed and other conveniences with which the coach was fitted, Weller had also provided a stock of choice victuals, wines and spirits. Thomson not only paid over the promised hundred pounds but he also presented Weller with a handsome gold watch, suitably inscribed, recording the actual time taken for the trip. Weller also happily collected the thousand pounds he had won in wagers.

Why was it so important for the governor general to get to Montreal in such a hurry?

One authority states that it was to "catch a parting steamship." Madelein Muntz, the foremost authority on William Weller had this to say on the subject, "I've

The massive Weller coach glides through the wilderness on its record-breaking journey from Toronto to Montreal. A pen drawing by George McElroy.

researched him for twenty years and still lack fundamental details. I have never found the true reason for the trip to Montreal. The versions I have seen are — to reprieve a prisoner — to help cool the differences between the provinces — for relief from stresses of work (*i.e.* for enjoyment!)."

The most likely explanation is that the trip was made in connection with the process of unifying Lower and Upper Canada into the United Province of Canada. This was the mission entrusted to Thomson when he was appointed governor general.

Following the 1837 rebellion in both Canadian provinces, the Earl of Durham had been appointed Governor General and Lord High Commissioner of British North America. He was given unparalleled authority and ordered to investigate the root causes of the rebellions and make appropriate recommendations. After less than six months in office, Lord Durham had a dispute with Lord Melbourne, the British Prime Minister, and resigned. He then returned to England and submitted his famous report.

Lord Durham, who was popularly known as "Radical Jack" because of his liberal ideas and reform sympathies, included Responsible Government for Canada as one of his main recommendations. Another was to unite the two Canadian provinces under a single legislature with a view to settling the "French problem" in British North America for all time. Durham saw the French-speaking Canadians as simple peasant folk, sunk in apathy, who lived primitively and used antiquated and uneconomical farming methods. They seemed to have no literature or culture and even the language they spoke was not the French his lordship had learned from his tutors. He, therefore, concluded that it would be a great blessing to all concerned to create conditions that would allow the "French problem" to die a natural death. This could be accomplished by creating a united province and giving equal parlia-

The Weller stage coach at Oakville House, circa 1837, as described by Anna Jameson. An acrylic painting by George McElroy.

mentary representation to each segment. There were 450,000 inhabitants in Upper Canada compared to 650,000 in the lower province. Equal representation would enable the English minority in Lower Canada to join forces with the English representing Upper Canada so that the French would always be certain to be outvoted in the legislature. Time and increased British immigration would eventually bring about the desired result.

Lord Melbourne and his administration were cool towards the idea of Responsible Government but liked the recommendation to unify. However, still smarting from some of the lessons learned from the rebellions, it was wisely decided to obtain some measure of consent from the colonists before passing an Act of Union in the British parliament. It was also agreed that the man chosen to be British North America's next governor general would have to have exceptional diplomatic ability, tact and powers of persuasion as well as posessing wide experience in commerce and government. Lord Melbourne was certain that he knew just the right man for the job. He was Charles Poulett Thomson, already a member of Melbourne's government, who had been serving as President of the Board of Trade since 1834. Thomson has been described as "a highly practical, liberal businessman, thoroughly skilled in the arts of political management, a compound of calculation, driving ambition and buoyant energy."

Upon arrival in Canada in September 1839 Thomson took up residence in Montreal instead of in the Chateau St. Louis at Quebec, the traditional vice-regal residence. Montreal was the commercial metropolis for both Canadian provinces and it was here that the ruling Special Council for Lower Canada was situated. Following the rebellion, the constitution of Lower Canada had been suspended and replaced by a nominated Special Council which could be depended upon to promote the interests of the powerful English commercial class.

Not surprisingly, the new governor general had no trouble in obtaining agreement from the Special Council. Union would provide an effective means of keeping

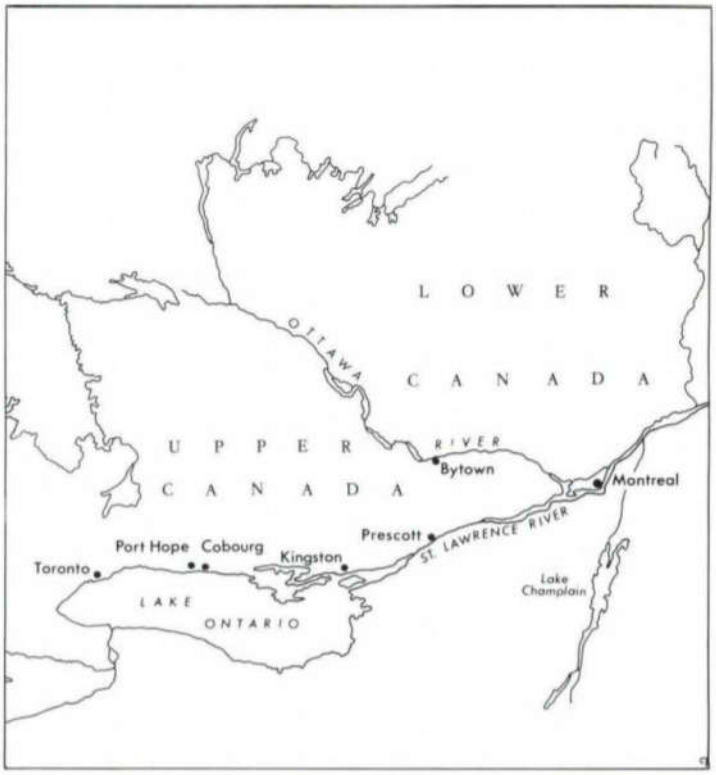
the French in check and reducing tariffs on the rich trade up the St. Lawrence to the interior. Thomson then busied himself with the task of selecting candidates to stand for election to the legislature of the United Province of Canada when it came into being. By November, he was ready to move on to Toronto where, he was well aware, his task of convincing the elected representatives of the upper province would be much more difficult. Members of that die-hard provincial oligarchy, the Family Compact, were reluctant to have their power absorbed in a larger unit. Also, most Tories didn't want to get mixed up with what they considered to be a bunch of alien, disaffected and, presumably, backward French.

Thomson tackled the problem by seeking support from the reform-minded opposition, tempting them with vague promises of "responsible government". He also promised that the practice of dividing customs revenues on the St. Lawrence would be ended by unification and that Upper Canada's heavy indebtedness would be taken over by the new administration. He pointed out that the increased resources of a united province would make it possible to complete the building of several canals along the St. Lawrence waterway. Eventually, these commercial considerations won over many reluctant Tories and, after much heated discussion, the Union Plan was finally approved by the majority. By this time, however, it was mid-winter and the governor general found himself marooned.

If it hadn't been for William Weller, the governor general's despatches and report to Lord Melbourne would have been delayed indefinitely. Instead, because of the record-breaking run, they were soon carried aboard ship and on their way to England. The Act of Union was passed into law in the British parliament and Charles Poulett Thomson was created Baron Sydenham of Kent. He was also rewarded by being made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath.

On 10 February 1841, the first wedding anniversary of the young Queen Victoria and the christening day of her first child, batteries of cannon were fired in centres in both Lower and Upper Canada. In Montreal, there was a parade of the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the 85th Light Infantry and the military commander, the mayor and corporation and all the lesser military and civil officials gathered at the Chateau de Ramezay to hear Lord Sydenham, the Governor General, proclaim that the separate provinces of Lower and Upper Canada no longer existed and that henceforth both would be known as the United Province of Canada. The capital was to be situated at Kingston, Canada West.

Not everywhere was there rejoicing. All the proclamations, printed in both English and French, that had been posted throughout the city to herald the day of union, were all ripped down and destroyed overnight.



Lord Sydenham died at Kingston on 19 September 1841, as a result of complications arising from a riding accident. As he was unmarried, the peerage died with him.

William Weller went on to build himself an even greater transportation empire of stage coaches, steamships and railways but, eventually, over-extended himself and lost most of his fortune. He was a member of the Cobourg Board of Police for many years and its president for three terms. He was a stockholder in the Cobourg and Port Hope Road Company and president of the Cobourg and Rice Lake Plank Road and Ferry Company. He was mayor of Cobourg on three occasions and also served as town councillor. He died on 21 September 1863, at Cobourg, Canada West. According to his biographer, Madelein Muntz, in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography:* "William Weller was a colourful character, robust, generous and good-natured, and with a lively sense of humour. He probably had 22 children, 11 by his first wife, Mercy Willcox who died in 1843, and 11 by his second wife, Margaret McKechin. His youngest child, John Laing Weller, was engineer in charge of constructing the Welland Ship Canal beginning in 1900." ♦

George McElroy of Oakville, Ontario, wrote of another Canadian governor general, the Duke of Richmond, in our June/July 1990 issue.

'A Very Affectin' Thing'

the Scottish origin of the *Canadian Boat Song*

By Hubert G. Mayes

From the lone shieling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

These lines, familiar to many Canadians, linger in the memory because of their imagery, their pleasing sounds and rhythms, and their mood of poignant nostalgia mingled with national pride. However, most people who know the quotation — including Canadians of Scots descent — are unable to name the poem from which it is taken. Until recently I belonged to this category myself. My search for the source of the poem led me back to its origin in the literary world of nineteenth-century Scotland, but it also convinced me that Canadians should consider the well-known lines to be part of their own historical and cultural heritage.

In 1987, I happened to meet a film crew from Grampian Television of Scotland. They had come to Winnipeg to film segments of *The Blood is Strong*, a documentary on the Gaelic Scots at home and abroad. At the beginning of their prospectus for the program I read the lines quoted above, and underneath them the following indication of the source: "Song of the Canadian Fishermen". A faint echo of a different title sounded in my memory: somewhere I had read that the lines came from a poem called "Canadian Boat Song". I decided to confirm this recollection, because it seemed to me that if the other stanzas were equal in quality to the one I knew, the effort required to find the poem would be well rewarded.

Another part of my impression was that the "Canadian Boat Song" was by an anonymous author. I mistakenly assumed that this anonymous poet was a Canadian, and as a result spent several fruitless hours searching in the nineteenth-century sections of anthologies of Canadian poetry. As it happens, there *is* a poem entitled "A Canadian Boat Song" in the anthologies. It was published in 1806 by the Irish poet Thomas Moore, and it used to appear in Canadian school readers. If given a little prompting, many Canadians "of a certain age" can quote — or sing — some of the lines of the first stanza:

Faintly as tolls the evening chime,
Our voices keep tune and our oars keep time.
Soon as the woods on shore look dim,
We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn.
Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The Rapids are near, and the daylight's past!

Seeing these faintly-remembered lines gave me some pleasure, but led me no closer to the object of my search. In fact, I reflected that the almost identical titles of the two poems has probably added to the confusion surrounding the song of the Scottish exiles.

At this point in my search a Scot who was visiting Canada tactfully informed me that the "Canadian Boat Song" had been written by a Scot and that it had first appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* (Edinburgh) in 1829. He also intimated that it was part of the literary heritage of every well educated Scot. Though I was privately skeptical about every literate Scot's familiarity with the whole poem, I realized that I was on the track, not of a Canadian, but a Scottish "classic".

A quick glance at the table of contents of the *Oxford Book of Scottish Verse* brought me to the end of my quest. There it was: entitled simply "Canadian Boat Song," it appears under the heading "Anonymous (18th Century)". Classifying the poem as an eighteenth-century work may have been simply a careless mistake. On the other hand, the editors may have believed that the song was actually composed long before it appeared in *Blackwood's*. The poem consists of five four-line stanzas preceded in this version by an introductory couplet. I was to learn later that this couplet was originally intended as a refrain. Here is the complete text:

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

"Listen to me, and then in chorus gather/ All your deep voices, as ye pull your oars."

Listen to me, as when ye heard our father
Sing long ago the song of other shores—
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather
All your deep voices, as ye pull your oars.

From the lone shieling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

We ne'er shall tread the fancy-haunted valley,
Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small clear stream,
In arms around the patriarch banner rally,
Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam.

When the bold kindred, in the time long vanish'd,
Conquer'd the soil and fortified the keep—
No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
That a degenerate lord might boast his sheep.

Come foreign rage—let Discord burst in slaughter!
O then for clansman true, and stern claymore—
The hearts that would have given their blood like water,
Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar.

The poem presents few linguistic difficulties, but two words may be unfamiliar to non-Scots: a "shieling" is a hut or cottage on a summer pasturage and a "claymore" is a large two-edged sword formerly used by the Scottish Highlanders. The "royal tombstones" are no doubt a reference to the graves of the Scottish kings on Iona and on Inch Kenneth off the coast of Mull.

Though the second stanza has poetic qualities that make it stand out above the others, the rest of the poem deserves more attention than it has received. The images recalling the beloved Hebrides powerfully express the longing of the exile for a landscape he will never see again, and the last two verses cry out strongly, first against the cruelty and injustice of the Highland Clearances, which uprooted defenceless crofters to make room for sheep pastures, and second against the weakening of the Scottish nation by the forced emigration of the very people who would have been its staunchest defenders.

Because certain aspects of the final stanza raised questions in my mind, and also because the Scottish visitor already mentioned told me that much had been written about the poem (especially the question of authorship), I decided to try to uncover more information about the "Boat Song" during a trip to Scotland in June 1990. I hoped that in some of the great libraries

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gaun away, man and mither's son, frae the Isle o' Arran. Pity on us! was there a bonnier sight in the warld, than to sail by yon green shores on a braw summer's evening, and see the smoke risin' frae the puir bodies' bit shielings, ilk ane wi' its peatstack and its twa three auld dunnerd pines, or saughs, or elms, sugh—sughin' owre the thack in the gloamin' breeze?

NORTH.

By the bye, I have a letter this morning from a friend of mine now in Upper Canada. He was rowed down the St Lawrence lately, for several days on end, by a set of strapping fellows, all born in that country, and yet hardly one of whom could speak a word of any tongue but the Gaelic. They sung heaps of our old Highland oar-songs, he says, and capitally well, in the true Hebridean fashion; and they had others of their own, Gaelic too, some of which my friend noted down, both words and music. He has sent me a translation of one of their ditties—shall I try how it will croon?

OMNES.

O, by all means—by all means.

NORTH.

Very well, y'll easily catch the air, and be sure you tip me vigour at the chorus. [*Chants.*

CANADIAN BOAT-SONG—(*from the Gaelic.*)

Listen to me, as when ye heard our father
Sing long ago the song of other shores—
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather
All your deep voices, as ye pull your oars:

CHORUS.

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

From the lone shieling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides:

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

We ne'er shall tread the fancy-haunted valley,
Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small clear stream,
In arms around the patriarch banner rally,
Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam:

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

When the bold kindred, in the time long-vanish'd,
Conquer'd the soil and fortified the keep,—
No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
That a degenerate Lord might boast his sheep:

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

Come foreign rage—let Discord burst in slaughter!
O then for clansman true, and stern claymore—
The hearts that would have given their blood like water,
Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar:

Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land.

SHEPHERD.

Hech me! that's really a very affectin' thing, now.—Weel, Doctor, what say you? Another bowl?

Facsimile of the page on which the "Canadian Boat Song" appeared, "Blackwood's Magazine", September 1829. From "A Literary Enigma" by Edward MacCurdy.

of Edinburgh or Glasgow someone would help me locate books and periodicals in which the poem and the problem of authorship had been examined. But it was in a second-hand bookshop in St. Andrews that a remarkable stroke of luck provided the documentation I was looking for. I was about to leave the store after discussing some other subjects of research when the proprietor reached down to a shelf and produced a book which she said she usually showed to Canadians who came into the shop, and which might possibly interest me. It was entitled *A Literary Enigma — The Canadian Boat Song: its authorship and associations* by Edward MacCurdy, published by Eneas Mackay in Stirling in 1935. After exclaiming at the coincidence that had brought this rare book and an equally rare buyer together, the bookseller and I concluded our transaction and I walked out with my valuable find. It contained a bonus — a musical setting of the poem by Calum MacPharlain and Andrew J. Orr. The latter had written on it "With A. J. Orr's compliments," and the previous owner had taped it to the title page.

MacCurdy's work discusses the first appearance of the poem, the manner in which it gradually acquired its reputation, and the evidence for and against the possible authorship by eight poets. These are: the Earl of Eglinton, Sir Walter Scott, John Galt, William Dunlop, James Hogg, John Wilson, David MacBeth Moir and John Gibson Lockhart. In the course of his analysis of the claim for authorship (none of them made by the authors themselves), MacCurdy makes reference to all the books on the subject which preceded his, as well as to letters and articles which had appeared in newspapers and magazines.

The frontispiece of MacCurdy's book is a reproduction of a photocopy of the page in *Blackwood's Magazine* on which the "Boat Song" is printed. The poem appeared in Number 46 of a series of conversations published under the title *Noctes Ambrosianae*. The participants in the discussions were regular contributors to *Blackwood's* who met in the evening at Ambrose's Tavern. On the evening in question several of these writers, including Christopher North (the pseudonym of Professor John Wilson) and the "Shepherd" (a rustic figure usually linked with the poet James Hogg), are engaged in an imaginary conversation about Scottish nationalism. One member of the group complains that because of changes in the entail law English capitalists are gaining control of land which belonged to the Scottish gentry. The discussion leading up to the poem unfolds as follows:

SHEPHERD

Weel, if the gentry lose the land, the Highland anes at ony rate, it will only be the Lord's righteous judgment on them for having dispossessed the people before them. Ah! wae's me — I hear the Duke of Hamilton's cottars are a' gaun away, man and mither's son, frae the Isle o' Arran. Pity on us! was there a bonnier sight in the warld, than to sail by yon green shores on a braw summer's evening, and see the smoke risin' frae the puir bodies' bit shielings, ilk ane wi' its peatstack and its twa three auld donnered pines, or saughs, or elms, sugh-sughin' owre the thack in the gloamin' breeze?

NORTH

Bye the bye, I have a letter this morning from a friend of mine now in Upper Canada. He was rowed down the St. Lawrence lately, for several days on end, by a set of strapping fellows, all born in that country, and yet hardly one of whom could speak a word of any tongue but the Gaelic. They sung heaps of our old Highland oar-songs, he says, and capitally well, in the true Hebridean fashion; and they had others of their own, Gaelic too, some of which my

Sir Walter Scott reads to his friends, from a painting by Thomas Faed. Three of the possible authors of the "Boat Song" appear in the picture: Scott, Wilson (North) and Lockhart. North is the man leaning on the chair-back. Lockhart sits to North's right beyond the wine jug.

friend noted down, both words and music. He has sent me a translation of one of their ditties — shall I try how it will croon?

OMNES

O, by all means — by all means.

NORTH

Very well, ye'll easily catch the air, and be sure you tip me vigour at the chorus.

[Chants.]

(The "Boat Song" appears here with the two-line chorus [Fair these broad meads, etc.] after each verse.)

SHEPHERD

Hech me! that's really a very affectin' thing, now. —Weel, Doctor, what say you? Another bowl?

Apart from the inclusion of the chorus after each verse, the original *Blackwood's* version differs only slightly from the Oxford version already seen. In the original, the words "boat" and "song" in the title are connected with a hyphen, the words "from the Gaelic" follow the title, the word "lord" in verse four is written with a capital letter, and a colon is placed at the end of each stanza.

Because Professor Wilson (North) generally assumed responsibility for the *Noctes*, it was long believed that he had written the "Boat Song" as well as the dialogue. However, in 1855 when his collected works were published, it was revealed that the forty-sixth *Noctes* was not one that he had composed. Since Wilson was not in Edinburgh in the fall of 1829, the task of writing the *Noctes* fell upon his associate, John Gibson Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott. Much later, when the churchman Norman MacLeod asked the two men to reveal what they knew about the authorship of the "Boat Song," Lockhart maintained complete silence and Wilson disclaimed any knowledge of the matter. "The secret was so well guarded in the lifetime of those who knew," says MacCurdy, "that — except in the hardly probable event of new relevant matter of primary importance coming to light — it is hardly likely that there will ever be complete agreement as to its solution." MacCurdy speculates that Lockhart kept silent because he may have made changes in the poem as it was originally sent to him — changes important enough to give the poem a dual authorship.

After examining all the evidence, MacCurdy concludes that the most probable author of the "Boat Song" was David MacBeth Moir, a doctor in regular

practice in Musselburgh. Writing under the pseudonym "Delta," he was a prolific contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Of all the possible authors of the "Canadian Boat Song" he is, in MacCurdy's opinion, the one whose name "raises fewest difficulties". But there are also positive reasons for MacCurdy's conclusion: Moir was a gifted poet; he had received letters from his friend John Galt in Canada describing Canadian boatmen and their singing; he had already written some verse about the lot of the Highland exile; and in the few years preceding the "Boat Song" he had published poetry making use of the eleven-syllable line known as the "sapphic" — the metre employed in the first and third lines of each stanza of the "Canadian Boat Song".

An aspect of the poem which has some bearing on the question of authorship is the change of tone between the third and fourth stanzas — a change which strengthens the theory that more than one author may have been involved. In verse four, the muted nostalgia of the previous verses gives way to bitterness, and in verse five there is an outburst of anger and sorrow. According to MacCurdy, the first line of the last verse should be taken to mean: *If* foreign rage should come (to Scotland), and *if* Discord should burst into slaughter . . . MacCurdy also points out that the viewpoint of the writer of the last stanzas is clearly the Western Highlands, and quotes in support of his assertion the following letter from a Mr. Hoare to the *Glasgow Herald* in 1924: "The last two stanzas are clearly written by the home-dweller bewailing the absence of the stalwarts, and the retributive justice that awaits the land in consequence when wars arise. No Celt in exile would put himself in this posture." If this is so, there is a serious flaw in the unity of the poem, as the speaker in the first three stanzas is a Scottish-Canadian boatman who is addressing his fellow rowers. One can simply accept this shift in point of view as an accident which occurred as the author let himself be carried away by his emotions. It seems to me, however, that the author(s) can be defended by reading the last verse as follows: If Scotland should find herself obliged to take up arms to repel an invasion, she would then long for the presence of loyal clansmen wielding the fearsome claymore, but the hearts (our own) that would have given their blood freely for the homeland now beat (over here) beyond the Atlantic's roar.

Another area of controversy has been the words "from the Gaelic" which follow the title. If indeed the poem was written in Scotland and subsequently inserted into the *Noctes* dialogue, North's claim that the song had come to him from a friend in Canada and was a translation from the Gaelic was nothing but a whimsical deception on the part of Lockhart. MacCurdy states that half a century of continuous research both in Canada and in Scotland has revealed no evidence of any Gaelic original. To underline his point he quotes a Dr. Donald Masson as follows: "I lived among Canadian Highlanders all the way from Georgian Bay to Cape Breton, but I never heard a snatch of anything that looked in the least like the Gaelic original of the 'Canadian Boat Song'." And Neil Munro, quoted by George Fraser in his study *The Lone Shieling*, affirms: "The poem, though always said to be a translation of a Gaelic song by a Canadian exile, was never anything of the kind. It is beautiful, but it is, in its thought, in its fancy, utterly unlike any Gaelic poem I know, and the thought and language of it are so manifestly simultaneous in their inspiration that it is inconceivable that it can be a translation in the commonly accepted sense of the term." In the face of such authoritative statements, it is unlikely that anyone would still believe the poem to be a translation of a Gaelic song from Canada.

I have the impression, however, that the composers of the musical setting of the poem (which predates MacCurdy's book) took the alleged Gaelic origin of the song seriously. They used the refrain "Fair these broad meads" as an introduction and composed a new chorus in Gaelic. Another intriguing aspect of the musical setting is the authors' treatment of verse four. They

John Galt is often given credit for writing the "Boat Song". He was a friend and rival of Sir Walter Scott's and was a founder of the Canada Company in 1826.

A crofter's cottage, Isle of Skye, early nineteenth century.

have put brackets around the stanza and placed beside it the words "may be omitted". Even in 1931 when the music was composed there was apparently a danger that someone might be offended by the line about "a degenerate lord." As far as I have been able to determine, this setting has never enjoyed any popularity in Scotland or Canada. This is not surprising, since in my view the tune is not at all appropriate for the words.

The search for the origin of the "Canadian Boat Song" led me, as we have seen, to the discovery that the stated source of the poem was almost certainly a hoax perpetrated in a Scottish periodical over 160 years ago, and that its author was probably a nearly-forgotten writer named David MacBeth Moir. Does this discovery have any significance for present-day Canadians? First, a comment on the hoax: it seems to me that no one should be troubled by Lockhart's deception concerning the origin of the poem. Since no author protested that he had not been given credit for his work, we can presume that Lockhart and the author had agreed on an anonymous presentation. What matters to us is the quality of the verse and the historical and emotional associations that the poem has acquired with the passing of time. While some may have reservations about the praise that has been bestowed on the poem, few will dispute that it conveys in highly expressive language the attachment of Scottish expatriates to their homeland. To be precise, the singer and the other rowers are the *sons* of exiles. The first lines make this clear: "Listen to me as when ye heard our father/ Sing long ago the song of other shores —"; and Lockhart describes them as: "a set of strapping fellows all born in that country" (Upper Canada). The depth of emotion shown by these second-generation Canadians is all the more striking since they know about the land of their forebears only through the stories and songs of their parents.

Frequent references to the "Boat Song" on patriotic occasions and in writings about the preservation of Scottish traditions have gradually made the poem part of the cultural heritage of Scots in Canada. They will continue to hear it quoted at St. Andrew's Day banquets, Burns dinners, Highland Games and ceilidhs — and so will other Canadians, for it is not just people of Scots descent who take pleasure from these events. When their emotions are stirred by the familiar lines, Canadian Scots should be aware that the poem is a legacy they share with Scots in the homeland. This common heritage extends of course to all parts of the world where descendants of Scottish emigrants remain conscious of their roots. In this regard the Scottish writer Neil Munro has said: "Today it [the poem] is one of those few lyrics which have become part of the common feeling of the British race throughout the world." Knowing the genesis of the poem should also make listeners and readers realize that at a time when there was widespread indifference to the plight of innocent people being driven off their crofts to make room for sheep, there was at least one non-Gaelic poet in Scotland who understood their suffering and had the courage to raise his voice in protest.

Finally, the reprinting of the "Boat Song" in this magazine may make it accessible to many who have been curious — as I was — to see the whole poem. Perhaps having a complete and authentic version readily at hand will stimulate speakers at Scottish gatherings to quote more than the second stanza. If "still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland," their listeners will respond with gratitude. ♦

Hubert G. Mayes of Winnipeg is a frequent contributor to "The Beaver".

Undefeated

300 Years of Ojibwa History: Part One

By J.M. MacDonald

There are no written records, no crumbling documents or yellowed photographs to tell their story. From the remnants of long-dead campfires and burial sites we have sifted evidence, piecing together a highly theoretical construct of their lives. From the pens of early explorers, Jesuits, and anthropologists we have inherited a mountain of reportage, most of it impassioned, all of it contradictory. "They are a loving people, without covetousness", wrote Christopher Columbus. "Their speech is the sweetest and gentlest in the world."

A frontier newspaper declared them to be "A set of miserable, dirty, lousy, blanketed, thieving, lying, sneaking, murdering, graceless, faithless, gut-eating skunks as the Lord ever permitted to infect the earth, and whose immediate extermination all men should pray for."

They were the aboriginals, the first residents of North America. And if white newcomers to the continent held wildly divergent views about aboriginal society, they generally agreed that it wouldn't last long in the face of European immigration. Early immigrants to North America, armed with Bibles, guns and the self-importance afforded by both, were distressed that Indian society did not disappear as quickly as they had hoped. The Puritans burned their villages and shot them for their impertinence. The American government eventually outlawed their presence altogether in the eastern United States. Indians were marched at bayonet-point to the plains west of the Mississippi, where they became the pet project of General Phil Sheridan of the U.S. Army, who helped engineer the destruction of the buffalo in the belief that if the buffalo died, the Indians would follow.

Other whites, with better intentions, volunteered for missionary work on reserves, organized adoption of Indian children to white families, and spirited native children off to residential schools, where they were housed in chilly, austere barracks and taught to "speak white". But the Indians refused to be exterminated or assimilated. And after three hundred years of white rule in North America, Indian society has not only survived, but is staging a massive comeback.

The Ojibwa Indians are a people now caught up in cultural renewal. Wasted by disease, environmental destruction, poverty, alcoholism, the Ojibwa are casting far back into their past, to the religious traditions of their pre-contact days, to retrieve survival skills that helped make them one of the most widespread Indian nations in North America. The Ojibwa trace their beginnings back to the first hunter-gatherers, or "Paleo-Indians", who migrated into the lands opened by the retreating glaciers ten thousand years ago. Archaeologists say that by the year 5000 B.C. these hunter-gatherers were well-established across North America. Pottery-making, agriculture, jewellery-making and long distance trade routes were developed and when Columbus arrived in 1492 the aboriginal population was thriving. Most estimates place the number of natives then residing on the continent as somewhere between 9,000,000 and 12,500,000. Despite the presumed benefits of modern social services and health care, that number represents almost ten times the population alive today.

The Ojibwa are at present known by several names — "Chippewa" in the United States, "Saulteaux" on the plains of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (pronounced "Soto"), but they are essentially one nation, united by language (Algonkian) and religion (Midewewin). When the French and English first arrived in North America in the 1600s the Ojibwa resided around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Valley. Before the cash economy of the fur trade became an influence, the Ojibwa governed their hunting and gathering activities according to the season. Each subtle turn of the calendar signalled the end of one phase of their economic activities and the beginning of another. Because they did not believe that it was possible to "own" the land upon which they travelled and hunted, they paid no concern to the significance of their tribal wanderings. The prospect of greener hunting grounds, somewhere beyond the next riverbend, piqued their

Royal Ontario Museum

Fishing by torch-light (Fox River), by Paul Kane, 1845.

curiosity and kept them roving westward. Carrying all they needed in their canoes and on their backs, the Ojibwa were essentially at home wherever they travelled.

In spring the smallish extended-family groups that had wintered together would set up camp by a maple or box elder forest and harvest maple sugar. These small family groups enlarged as lake ice melted, streams opened, and other winter hunting bands arrived by canoe to join the sugar-making activities. In June, when the entire tribe was present, the annual religious festivals of Midewewin took place. The Midewewin religion was and still is the spiritual center of Ojibwa life. The Ojibwa believe that the earth is a living thing, and that all plants and animals possess a divinity and a "soul" that is part of the greater spiritual whole.

Midewewin priests spent a lifetime studying their religion, and periodically led the tribe through ceremonies that were intended to bring good health and the Creator's blessing. Midewewin ceremonies were exceedingly complex and highly ritualized. Like many aboriginal peoples, the Ojibwa continually paid homage to the cycle of the seasons, the wheel of life, or "the hoop of earth" as it was known, and the circle, with its four quadrants, was a central motif in Midewewin ceremonies. The Midewewin lodge was carefully constructed so that its entrance faced east, towards the rising sun, the "giver of life", and its exit faced west, towards the direction of death — and the setting sun.

The four winds, the quadrants of the compass, the four seasons; even the archetypal notion of "the elements" were central to Midewewin religion. In pre-Christian Europe, alchemists believed that all things were composed of various combinations of earth, air, fire and water. The Ojibwa had similar notions. The Midewewin "water drum" was constructed of specific materials that reflected the makeup of the earth. Edward Benton Banai, a modern-day Midewewin priest from Minnesota, reveals that the water within an Ojibwa drum functions as a symbol of lakes and rivers, the life-blood of the earth. The wooden core of the drum symbolizes the plant world; the stretched deer-hide drum head represents the spirit of animals, and the entire drum itself is brought to life when the Midewewin priest blows breath into it. Many Canadians still recall when Ojibwa drums echoed across the glassy water of cottage-country lakes. Those drums, the Ojibwa believed, were the sound of the Creator's heart.

After the religious rites of spring the Ojibwa settled into their summer campground, and spent their time fishing, hunting and making goods: clothes, utensils, weapons, and canoes. Fish were speared at night by canoeists who cruised the shallows with spruce-pitch torches. Fish were also taken with dip nets, gill nets, weirs, basket traps, and snares. Fish hooks were made by looping a tiny twig of willow at the end of a line. Once swallowed, the willow stick caught in the fish's

Two portrait studies by Paul Kane. A Saulteaux girl (left) and an Assiniboine.

throat and it was quickly hauled in. Blueberries were gathered, strips of meat and fish were dried in the sun, and towards the end of the summer hundreds of pounds of wild rice were harvested and processed. Food was cached in six-foot-deep pits lined with timbers and wild hay. Once sealed up, these food caches provided security for the winter.

In fall, the large tribe split up into family and extended-family groups which typically consisted of about sixteen individuals. These small groups wandered off in search of good hunting territories and harvested meat for the winter. The hunters were highly skilled and knew that large quantities would be needed. One group of Ojibwa, upon arriving at a new location, prepared themselves by harvesting "one hundred rabbits for each person".

The traditional tools, weapons and utensils employed by the Ojibwa were so various, and ingenious in their design, that an immense volume would scarcely begin to describe them. Bows and arrows, for example, were made by skilled artisans within the extended tribe. An Ojibwa woodworker might turn out ten finished arrows in a day. According to Tom Skinaway, a blind woodworker of the Mille Lac Ojibwa, arrows were made from the stalk of the Juneberry bush. Arrows for hunting waterfowl were made of cedar so that they would float. Hawk or eagle feathers were used for fletching, and each arrow was decorated with the hunter's individual mark.

Bows were made of ash, were approximately four feet long, and were strung with either the inner fibre of the stinging nettle plant or a thong made from the neck of a snapping turtle. The turtle's neck skin was cut into a long strip, which was twisted into cord. Unlike most other bowstring materials, turtle skin was long-lasting, and was unaffected by moisture and extremes of temperature. Turtles were also revered by the Ojibwa. The Great Turtle was invariably greeted with loving applause when his spirit-voice was heard at a Shaking Tent ceremony, and hunters may have believed that such bowstrings possessed spiritual properties. Magical or not, a stout bow made from these materials could drive an arrow completely through a large animal like a moose.

It was important that a Midewewin priest accompanied each hunting group. Although preparations were thorough, winter was a hazardous and frightening time for the Ojibwa, and the priest provided some insurance against evil spirits like *Misshypishu*, the underwater panther that lived beneath the waves, and could whip the autumn lake into a tempest in minutes, and *Windigo*, the immense maneater that stalked the winter forests whenever a blizzard came down from the north.

In winter, the band lived in birch-bark wigwams, insulated with snow and floored with thick layers of balsam branches and furs. Hunters used snowshoes for winter travel, but deep snow and cold temperatures often kept the band immobile for weeks at a time, and

they passed the time uneasily telling stories, mending clothing and sleeping for long stretches inside woven rabbit-skin robes, waiting for dripping icicles and yelping geese to once again signal that the great wheel was turning into spring.

Undefeated by an often-hostile wilderness, the Ojibwa not only survived but prospered. During the 1700s they expanded their territory out of the St. Lawrence Valley and migrated as far as northwestern Ontario. The fur trade encouraged this adventuring, but occasionally pitted one group of Indians against another. Living for centuries as hunters, the Ojibwa were urged by traders to abandon their traditional livelihood and become, in essence, entrepreneurs. In exchange for beaver pelts, Indian fur suppliers were given blankets, kettles, axes and other labour-saving goods. The Ojibwa welcomed the opportunity to acquire these goods, and their participation in the fur trade was entirely voluntary. The popular image of innocent natives exchanging priceless furs for trinkets and glass beads is inaccurate. Aboriginal trade systems were long-established when Europeans arrived in North America and individual natives were probably well-schooled in the art of barter. Indians in fact may have been amused and pleased that Europeans were willing to swap such

Ritual pouch decorated with quillwork depicting the mythical underwater panther, circa 1770. In the collection of the National Museum of Civilization.

An encampment of the Midewewin society of the Ojibwa, 1930s.

HBC Collection

fine, practical goods for comparatively useless beaver skins.

Travelling light, living effortlessly off the land, the Ojibwa sought out new fur-trapping areas and eventually infiltrated northwestern Ontario. There, they entered the "turf" of the Sioux, who controlled the rich forests around Lake of the Woods. The Sioux were determined not to share the Lake of the Woods and the Ojibwa were unwilling to turn their canoes around and head home. Bickering led to war. Beautiful pine-feathered shorelines won names such as Massacre Island, Warroad, and Sioux Narrows. Finally, the Sioux abandoned the Lake of the Woods country and retreated to the west. The Ojibwa, ghosting silently in their birch-bark canoes, followed.

According to Ojibwa legend, they were born in the east, in the valley of the great St. Lawrence, and throughout the centuries their protective spirit the White Otter had led them westward. So far that spirit had served them well. But just beyond the trees of the eastern woods lay an impassable barrier: the Great Plains. Thundering herds of great shaggy animals roamed there, and blue-flowered grasses rippling like an ocean. But the Ojibwa's birch-bark canoes could carry them no further. And even if they did, there was danger ahead. An Ojibwa chief of the Red Lake band described the dilemma: "While they [the Sioux] keep to the plains with their horses we are not a match for them; for we being foot men, they get to windward of us, and set fire to the grass."

Stalled, the Ojibwa lingered on the edges of the eastern forests and pondered their next move. They might have gone back into the woods and conceded defeat. But if the harsh conditions of the northern wilderness couldn't defeat them, nor would the Great Plains. Over the next fifty years the Ojibwa expanded out onto the prairies and consolidated their hold on one of the largest Indian territories in history — an empire that stretched from southern Ontario and Wisconsin to Saskatchewan and western Montana. The empire was founded, not on economic superiority or military force, but on the Ojibwa's handiest trait — ingenuity. Confronted by hostile mounted Plains Indians, the Ojibwa abandoned their birch-bark canoes, their wigwams, their snowshoes, even their beloved moose and snapping turtle and chose an ingenious option. Armed with only their language and religion, they sprang up onto the backs of stolen Sioux ponies and became Plains Indians themselves. ♦

J.M. MacDonald is a Winnipeg writer who has a particular interest in aboriginal matters. His article on the Chipewyan of Northern Manitoba appeared in the February/March 1987 issue.

This is the first of three articles on Canada's Ojibwa people. In the next article, native history is examined from the point of view of the oral traditions of the Ojibwa themselves.

First People, First Impressions

They have no idea of amassing wealth for themselves individually; and they wonder that persons can be found in any society so destitute of every generous sentiment, as to enrich themselves at the expense of others, and to live in ease and affluence regardless of the misery and wretchedness of members of the same community to which they themselves belong.

— Issac Weld Jr., "Travels through the States, and the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, 1799".

I love you. I have smoked out of the same pipe with you. You are now my brother. I thank you for the presents you have given me. They are the first that we have received. They correspond with every part of your conduct toward us. You have a charitable heart. From the moment we saw you the dark clouds that covered us disappeared. We see clearly now.

— Peguis, Ojibwa chief at Red River on receiving gifts of rum, tobacco and ammunition from Colin Robertson of the Hudson's Bay Company, circa 1815.

If the white man also stays in North America another 10,000 years, he too will become Indian. If you think I mean wearing buckskin and living in wigwams, you are mistaken. I mean in gaining a feeling for this land. It is your only survival.

— Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, French theologian.

The term person means an individual other than an Indian.

— Section 12 of the Indian Act of 1880.

Beyond Hope, Past Redemption: The Lottie Bowron Story

By Thomas Fleming and Carolyn Smyly

In 1964, Miss Lottie Bowron died at the age of 84. The headlines of her obituary identify her as "Barkerville's Lottie Bowron" because she was born in that famous gold-rush mining town and because of her long association with it. Her father was John Bowron, pioneer postmaster and gold commissioner, whose Barkerville house has been restored by the provincial government as one of the tourist attractions of that historic site, and the family name has also been given to the Bowron lakes in central British Columbia.

In her later years, Miss Bowron spent a lot of time in her home town, becoming an expert on the history of St. Saviour's church, but very little is known about her earlier years and the two interesting positions she held in the course of her long and productive life. She was first the private secretary to the premier of British Columbia for a decade just before World War I, but in 1928 she was appointed to the position of Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer, a civil service rank with responsibilities equivalent to that of a provincial inspector of schools. It is the five years she spent in this position that makes her one of the most interesting figures in British Columbia's social and educational history.

Miss Bowron's mother, Emily, had been a schoolteacher in Barkerville, more out of necessity than vocation, it would seem, as she was listed in the annual school report of 1878 as being "not certificated". It would have been a natural course for her eldest daughter to complete her schooling, as she did at All Hallow's School at Yale, and sit for the teaching certificate exam. Instead, in Lottie's own words:

> Necessity led me to earn my own living, so having had a very limited experience in my father's office in Barkerville — I helped him occasionally when he was pressed — and finding that I liked the life, I came to Victoria in 1902 December and studied shorthand. It was my Father's wish that I should get a pos. [position] in the G.B.s [Government Buildings].

Her father did a little more than wish. He used his political connections with Richard McBride, who had just become premier of the province, and Lottie was told "I had better call on the Premier — R. McB. and see if he could promise me a position during the coming session." To the satisfaction of the Bowron family, Lottie was able to begin as a clerk, but before long became McBride's personal secretary.

McBride was the youngest man ever to become premier — at 27 — and the only premier of B.C. ever to be knighted. Lottie handled his office so well that when his personal and political fortunes failed at the outset of World War I, he could trust his somewhat tangled financial affairs and his personal papers to her safekeeping when he became British Columbia's Agent General in London.

Lottie eventually went to London as well, where she presided over a typing pool — another position acquired for her by McBride, but when he died suddenly of Bright's disease she continued on in London until the war's end. When she returned to Victoria, expecting to take up another senior secretarial job in the government after her leave of absence, she received a rude shock. The Conservative government, which she supported, had lost the election, and the Liberals, having just passed new civil service legislation, chose to interpret narrowly the regulations concerning the re-hiring of the ex-secretary of the former premier. Lottie found herself once again at the bottom of the secretarial ladder.

Rather than submit to the indignity of starting again at a salary of $62.00 a month — (she had earned $107 a month as McBride's secretary) — she found a position as a public stenographer in the Empress Hotel. At the same time, she began an association of business and professional women, to give the kind of "network"

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Facing the elements at Barkerville, about 1900. The young Lottie Bowron is seated beside the driver, sister Alice is directly behind.

support to women that men extended to one another through their social and professional connections. Thus "Kumtuks" was born, which later evolved into two separate organizations: the Soroptomists Club and the Victoria chapter of the Canadian Business and Professional Women's Organization. Miss Bowron was also the president of the Conservative Women's Association and campaigned actively throughout the 1920s.

When the Conservatives were returned to power in 1928 it surprised no one that Lottie was offered the newly-created position of Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer. While this position lasted only five years, from 1928 to 1933, it was in many ways more important than the McBride position. It was unique in several ways, but in order to understand the nature of her contribution, it is first necessary to review the state of provincial schooling on the eve of the Great Depression and the development of the teaching profession since the public education system was founded in the 1870s.

In 1873, when the first *Public Schools Report* was published, there were already 33 teachers in the province, 16 of whom were women. Ten of the 16 were either married (two to men teachers) or widowed, and while not many "professions" were open to widows at that time, teaching was emerging as a "genteel" occupation for women, suitable to their nurturing capabilities.

For the first fifty years after its inception, the Education Office struggled with problems of supply and demand — a demand for schools and teachers in settlements hundreds of miles apart, scattered over 360,000 square miles of mountain, swamp, rocky seashore, and muddy track; a demand for desks and books and globes and blackboards; a demand for teachers willing to cut themselves off from home and family and city living for ten months of the year, exposed to mosquitoes, wood stoves, water buckets, eight grades to teach among twelve pupils in one room, outdoor privies, fighting dogs in the schoolyard, interfering parents and sudden visits from the dreaded school inspector.

By the 1920s, eighty per cent of British Columbia's rural teachers were women. Many of them were just out of school themselves. In 1928, approximately 700 women teachers served in the rural schools, the vast majority of whom were unmarried and close to the lowest end of the salary scale. Some of these young women came from rural areas themselves, and they were the lucky ones. They had had first hand experience of being pupils in primitive conditions before they took on the responsibilities of teaching. The young

city women who set out on a first teaching job to places such as Simoom Sound, Anarchist Mountain, Blubber Bay, Chimney Creek, Dragon Lake or Fire Valley often had a traumatic apprenticeship.

These schools were generally understood to be training grounds for any teacher who might aspire in later career to the luxury of an appointment in a town or city school. Tongue-in-cheek, teachers and administrators over the years have defined the location and state of such schools as "beyond Hope and past Redemption." Neither men nor women stayed long in these distant educational outposts if they could help it. In the late 1920s and early 1930s teachers averaged about 18 months service in a district, which usually meant a year in one school followed by two years somewhere else. As a rule, the object of this nomadic existence was to move south and westward when opportunity permitted, away from northern and interior regions, and toward Victoria, Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, or the settled parts of the Okanagan.

Rural schools were locally governed by three-member boards of trustees, of whom one member served as the board secretary, responsible for administering the district's financial affairs and supervising school maintenance. The board was responsible for hiring and firing teachers. The Education Office in Victoria, later known as the Department of Education, kept control through the *School Act*, through forms and reports sent to the Superintendent of Schools, and through a corps of school inspectors, all male, who were assigned to individual inspectorates.

The Education Department attempted to promote equality of educational opportunity, and its emphasis lay toward ensuring the quality of teaching by a strict watch over school "efficiency". Problems of day-to-day administration, discipline, salary payment, housing, school supplies and the thousand and one details of daily business were expected to be dealt with between the teacher and the secretary of the school board.

If relationships were amicable, things tended to run more or less smoothly, but by the 1920s the first report on the British Columbia public school system by Putnam and Weir pointed out the difficulties prevalent in the hinterland where "primitive conditions still prevail." They wrote:

> Some buildings are neat and comfortable. Others are scarcely habitable. In certain cases dilapidated log structures, with numerous defects in heating, lighting, and ventilation, are used for school purposes. The water supply is usually inadequate, while the privies are often found in filthy condition. Especially is this the case in the more remote schools. The school sites, generally unfenced, have a most picturesque natural setting, characteristic of rural British Columbia. In fact, every prospect (except the buildings and privies) pleases until, on entering the schoolhouse, the visitor's aesthetic sense receives a violent shock.

In such schools, problems flourished, but they were compounded in other ways, particularly for the young women.

In 1926, a young woman teaching at Port Essington at the mouth of the Skeena River did not return from a Sunday walk which was her only form of recreation. The next day her body was found. She had been raped and strangled. A young man was apprehended but was later released for lack of evidence, but if the teacher had been subjected to earlier harassment, no one knew

Children on the trek to school, Peace River district, early 1930s.

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Lottie Bowron on a tour of inspection, 1930.

of it. There was no one in whom she could have confided.

Two years later, on 16 November 1928 a 20-year-old teacher, Mabel Jones, was found dead in her cabin of self-inflicted gunshot wounds. In this case, the harassment had come from another woman — an elected school trustee who had been unmerciful in criticism of such professional "sins" as failing to lower the school flag every evening, permitting pupils to march into school "in a careless manner," and allowing children to paste pictures in their "good scribblers".

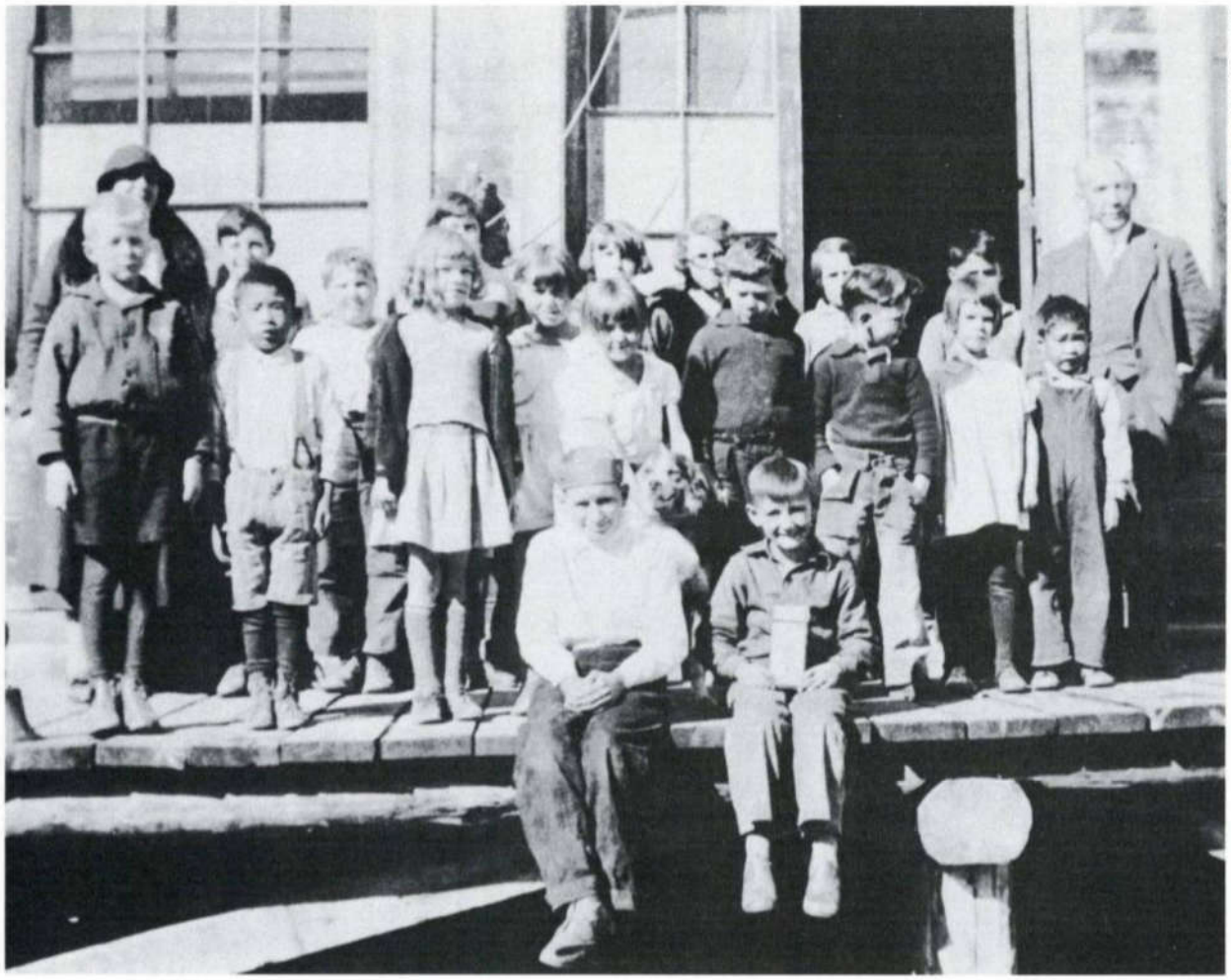
Public sentiment was immediately aroused by the newspapers' close coverage of the tragedy and the investigation that followed. Letters appeared in the press in support of the beleaguered young teachers and pressure was applied at the political level to Canon Hinchcliffe, the newly appointed Minister of Education. Susan Crease, daughter of British Columbia's first attorney-general, and a charter member of the Victoria Council of Women, led a deputation to Hinchcliffe's office demanding that the government act to alleviate the plight of school mistresses throughout the province. Her proposal was radical in nature — namely to appoint a *female* school inspector to examine and report specifically on the difficulties facing female teachers in schools and the conditions under which they worked.

The idea of appointing a woman to such a senior position in provincial administration was largely unprecedented. Apart from Miss J.L. MacLenaghen, who had been selected two years earlier, in 1926, to head the home economics office at headquarters in Victoria, no other woman had been asked to join the Department of Education. In fact, few women had been promoted to administrative positions, even in local school systems.

On 14 December 1928, less than a month after Miss Crease and her delegation had visited the minister, the Department of Education announced that Lottie Bowron had been appointed to the position of "Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer (Women's). For the first time in its history, the Department of Education was involving itself in the domain of social rather than educational welfare. Never before — or since — has the Department of Education attempted to intervene as directly in the lives of so many teachers. The school inspectors might be eligible for emotional or psychological support at times of trial, but teachers were considered to be the "property" of the school boards, and their welfare had not hitherto been a matter of provincial concern.

There was public recognition of the appointment being a matter of political patronage. Certainly Miss Bowron had sparse academic credentials for the job. She had never taught and there were many senior women teachers who could be considered by way of their experience at all levels of the system to be more suited for such a position. But Lottie had other qualifications. She was a child of the wilderness. She had been raised with quite "modern" ideas for her time. She appeared in her formative years to be independent, playful, and somewhat rebellious against the standards of proper conduct expected of young ladies in the late-Victorian age. In early photographs, she is shown demurely long-skirted but dusted with snow and in the process of a "romp" in the arms of a male companion. Other records of her early life reveal that she smoked cigars to be daring, and once jumped into the sea fully clothed as a prank. By the time she reached middle age, none of this might be known to Canon Hinchcliffe or to the Victoria Council of Women, but she was seen as a warm and energetic woman with the requisite common sense and sympathy for the plight of lively and lonely young women in the isolation and depression of the frontier.

She seems also to have been blessed with an iron fortitude and constitution because in her 50th year she set forth across the vast areas of the province to prove she was the right woman for the job.



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Miss Bowron (rear left) and Inspector W. Gamble pose with school children in the Peace River district, 1930s.

The first and most serious occupational challenge was transportation. In 1929, there were only 18,000 miles of road, most of it unfinished. To reach the northern part of the province by rail, a traveller from Victoria had first to travel to Edmonton. The Queen Charlotte Islands, and the scattered communities in inlets up the coast could only be reached by the boats of the Union Steamship Company with such peculiarities of scheduling that it was impossible to stop for more than a few moments in each village. Some communities could be reached only by foot, or horseback.

Whenever possible, Bowron relied on the school inspectors, the provincial police, or other government officials to apprise her of the routes she might take. One such itinerary prepared by Kamloops Inspector Harold Campbell detailed the most advantageous strategy for calling on teachers in the Peace River region:

> Take the E.D. and B.C. Railway from Edmonton. Take stage from Hythe to Pouce Coupe East, Dawson Creek, Dawson Creek North, Dawson Creek South, and Saskatoon Creek.

Following these instructions, he outlined in similar fashion the schools that could also be reached by rented car using Rolla and Fort St. John as staging points for her sorties throughout the plateau. Campbell concluded his letter of reconnaissance by cautioning Bowron with the less-than-cheery news that the schools at Forfar and Hudson Hope "could only be done by saddle or riverboat".

She was up to the challenge. In later years she was able to regale public audiences with tales of her adventures to Hudson Hope in an open flat-bottomed scow.

In the broadest sense, the job that Bowron began in the early new year of 1929 was that of an itinerant trouble-shooter or listening-post for the department —

someone who could alert the school inspectors, as well as senior educational officials in Victoria, to existing and potential situations of risk for the inexperienced young women who taught in rural schools. According to her reports, which are preserved in the Provincial Archives, her areas of concern centered on four areas: suitable boarding or living conditions, suitable social life and companionship in lonely places, level of community acceptance, and trustee/school board harmony.

The lack of suitable accommodation was a major issue throughout the rural area. Some school boards, in order to attract a teacher at all, had erected a "teacherage" in fairly close proximity to the school, or had rented a nearby structure for the purpose. The rental, however, and the furnishing of the building were often entirely the responsibility of the teacher and long usage left furnishings in poor repair. For the few who could find a habitable cabin to rent, living alone usually meant walking or riding to school and making trips to the nearest general store on weekends to purchase provisions, journeys which became impossible in winter or during the rainy season when roads became impassable.

Testimony to the physical hardship of this rural life is found in a photograph Bowron took on one of her visits to the Peace River. It shows Bowron and a woman teacher standing outside a log shack in winter weather. The building, a two-room structure with two tin stove pipes projecting through the roof, is likely the school and the "lean-to" teacherage attached. Three galvanized metal washtubs stand in the yard as evidence of laundry being done outside in sub-zero weather. Several pails and a shovel near the door suggest that all water, for drinking, bathing and laundry, was obtained by melting the snow. A lean dog in the foreground may have provided the teacher with some companionship and protection against intruders. A stand of leafless alders offers no real protection against the wind, and a desolate and frozen landscape stretches to the horizon. No doubt, the scene was normal enough for settlers in the Peace River, but it provided a stark contrast to the comforts of the city.

"Batching it", in Bowron's view, presented serious problems to do with safety and conduct. In one report, she advised a young teacher to "borrow" a neighbour's child, so that she might have someone with her at night. Whenever possible, sisters or widowed mothers were encouraged to share the accommodation and the domestic chores. Very often, Miss Bowron makes the comment that "no woman should live alone in this place."

Bowron was particularly apprehensive when teachers, for lack of alternatives, were forced to live in hotels. These establishments were run chiefly for commercial and railway men, and featured a beer parlour "down the hall". A teacher might be the only female guest,

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Lottie Bowron at the little log schoolhouse, Peace River, in the early 1930s.

and male humour ran to consistent "ragging" even when no actual physical danger existed. Tressie Gilliland, who taught school at Alert Bay in the 1920s, recalls her own ill-advised stay at the "only hotel in town". After drinking in the bar, her fellow guests would amuse themselves by calling her name through the paper-thin walls, offering to keep her warm by sharing her bed.

Complaints to the proprietor merely elicited the comforting suggestion that she prop a chair beneath the door handle of the unlockable door, and keep a length of cordwood handy. Gilliland lost considerable sleep before she was rescued by the Anglican clergyman's wife who gave her a room in the rectory, "even though I was not an Anglican."

Boarding with a family, which most teachers did, proffered its own advantages and problems. Bowron's reports reflect a definite note of relief when she observes that a teacher was situated comfortably with a family, enjoyed a room to herself, good meals, and a feeling of companionship. Such circumstances, of course, were perfect. Most teachers coped with a combination of good and bad, and made whatever adjustments they could. Even changing residence mid-term was a cause of public criticism, as it suggested all too plainly that something had been found lacking in the first household. The rental money from the teacher was, in Depression years, sometimes the only family income, and the loss of it was met with bitterness and a desire to "make trouble for the teacher". Many community upheavals could be traced to the desire of the teacher to better her accommodation by moving to another boarding place mid-term.

Social life was almost non-existent, and where it existed, the young woman school teacher was the object of everyone's attention. The community expected and demanded the very highest moral rectitude from the teacher of their children, and rightly so, but the interpretation of this ideal by community gossips caused endless "hard feeling".

Because the school building was sometimes used as a community hall for social events, for example, teachers occasionally enjoyed some social life, but public dances or "socials" held her conduct up to merciless scrutiny. One teacher could trace her fall from grace in the community to a Christmas party she arranged where a mistake was made in the handing out of treats to the children. Another teacher was faulted for "wild behaviour" because a male dancer swung her feet from the floor at the end of a lively reel. Even wearing "riding breeches" and sitting astride a horse was a matter for critical comment in Mud River in 1922. The young teacher confided to her diary: "Oh, I wish I could go home — or somewhere where I would not always have to be on the lookout not to do something a schoolteacher oughtn't to do . . . I have lost the footing somewhow that I had at the start and I wish the monotony, the endless days of doing the same thing over again would go. . . I am sick of being a grown-up young lady."

Other social and professional relationships, principally those which involved school board members, could also affect a teacher adversely. Trustees, for example, who found fault with a teacher's behaviour or personality, could make a teacher's position untenable in a small community, or, as in the case of Mabel Jones, lead to tragic consequences. The temptations to an abuse of power were many in remote areas, and government inspector Bill Plenderleith could write: "in most of the rural districts the direct and indirect authority wielded by the trustees over the teachers

Miss Bowron and a teacher outside a Peace River district school and teacherage, 1930s. Teachers endured loneliness and fear in remote cabins, although this teacher had a dog to keep her company and provide protection.

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amounted to tyranny." The tyranny could be organizational as well as social: teachers were appointed to certain schools on the basis of favouritism rather than merit and salary levels were sometimes likewise determined. A half century before sexual harassment became an important issue, Plenderleith also records the case of a board secretary who wielded the balance of power in an appointment decision "making himself objectionable to the teacher if she would not comply with his wishes in personal matters."

Bowron too, found similar instances of sexual harassment and of trustees misusing their authority. In 1933, a letter to Bowron from the inspector Ray McLeod, could delicately suggest that such problems were not altogether uncommon:

> I think that the teachers generally are quite happy. Miss Meade, at Rose Prairie, and Miss Windrem, at Tuscola Mountain, are possible exceptions . . . Miss Windrem's is a case of a rebuffed trustee suitor. The community is with her, however. I have been able to place men at Hanshaw and at Lone Prairie; also at Clayton where there was trouble last year.

As with Mabel Jones, women trustees could also be troublesome. At Bridge River in 1932 Bowron found Miss Rae, the teacher, in "rather a nervous state" as a result of a "very trying time: she had experienced at the hands of Mrs. L. . . ., one of the trustees". Despite Bowron's intercession in this matter, which took the form of a "very frank talk" with Mrs. L., the trustee continued to make life miserable for the teacher. Petitioned by the teacher and members of the community to straighten matters out, Bowron returned and visited a "distraught, almost hysterical" Mrs. L., who confessed that she had become "worked up about her boy having the strap" and wished to see the teacher resign. "Owing to her state I could say very little to her," Bowron reported, "but advised that she must keep away from the school and she said she would. The Bridge River situation is complicated," Bowron concluded, "but there is no question that Miss Rae is considered an excellent teacher and greatly respected and liked."

Such challenges, however onerous, paled when compared to the difficulties teachers faced in settlements such as Brilliant, Carson, Fruitova, Glade and Winlaw, where Doukhobor resistance to public schooling was expressed in threats to burn or bomb school buildings. In 1932, for example, schools in these Kootenay communities were patrolled nightly by police and hired guards and, in Brilliant, schools were subject to a second precautionary check each morning before pupils were permitted to enter. Not one to exaggerate, Bowron allowed that the teacher in Brilliant "had become a little nervous" after threats to destroy the school had been uttered and "someone had tried to break into her residence." Similarly, she understood the anxiety felt by teachers in Fruitova: "There is no doubt that the experience of a bomb having been placed under the building rather unnerved them, nor is it at all to be wondered at." In the face of these dangers, teachers stood up remarkably well. About one stalwart soul, Bowron wrote: "This teacher had rather a trying time recently when an attempt was made to burn her school. . . These things are very unsettling and while the teachers say little about it, one feels that at times they have their unhappy moments, but are very plucky."

In giving such support to teachers, not only in Doukhobor schools, but across the province, Bowron greatly endeared herself to the young women with whose welfare she was entrusted. "It is seldom indeed," she wrote in her annual report of 1930, "that I leave a teacher without an expression of appreciation for the visit and again and again I am told that the knowledge of such an appointment gives them a sense of security." In addition to official visits, she frequently wrote to teachers giving advice, moral support, and even a message from home. Teachers, in return, reciprocated with news of their district or expressions of their concern.

The complete rout of Tolmie's Conservative Government by Duff Patullo's Liberals in late autumn 1933 likely brought about the end of Bowron's career with the Department of Education. Despite her tireless efforts on behalf of rural teachers, Bowron was sent a letter on 28 February 1934 in which the Superintendent of Education informed her that it was the decision of the new Minister of Education, George Weir, "to discontinue the Rural Teachers' Welfare Branch from April 1, 1934." Under the terms of the separation, Bowron was granted a six-month leave of absence without salary and was "retired from the service of the Department" on a pension of $46.82 a month. She petitioned Weir for an extension of her position until the completion of the school year in June, but was unsuccessful. Although the reasons for her dismissal are not clear, Bowron no doubt understood that as a patronage appointment she would not be immune to changes in the political environment, nor could she expect the security of tenure normally awarded career civil servants. The absence of any sort of notice or interest in her dismissal by the popular press may suggest that the termination of her position was accepted as part of the natural political order, or that, as the Depression deepened, the government had lost interest in the welfare of rural teachers as a social or political issue, or was attempting to further restrain spending.

Alternatively, senior government officials may have believed that Bowron's work was close to complete. Over a period of nearly five years she had dealt with the most obviously unsatisfactory cases in which the welfare of women teachers had been jeopardized. Increasingly, her reports on teachers' living and work-

ing conditions contained little more than the comment "satisfactory". Her co-operation with the school inspectors had also done much to sensitize her male colleagues to the problems facing women in rural schools. In short, government may have felt that many of the difficulties she had been appointed to address had been resolved.

In any event, at 55 years of age, Bowron disappeared from public life and remained an obscure figure in the provincial memory until the late 1960s when the provincial government's restoration of Barkerville as an historic site cast her again briefly into the spotlight of public attention.

Although Bowron has been overlooked in the social and educational history of British Columbia, she deserves recognition as an interesting historical figure. Her career in the educational civil service, although short-lived, was unique — both in the way she obtained and lost her position, and in the unusual scope and nature of her work. Her reports document a time of change within the structure of the Department of Education, as the administrative structures for northern and interior regions moved toward school district consolidation, and the single rural schoolhouses disappeared from the map forever. Maxwell Cameron's 1946 master plan reduced the number of school districts in the province from 650 to 74, and led to the bureaucratization of rural school offices and to the professionalization of their administrative functions. This process of modernization would, in time, greatly improve the conditions of rural schools and the conditions in which teachers worked.

The narrative of educational life found in Bowron's reports also casts interesting historical light on the Department of Education's influence in provincial education by illustrating how circumspect school officials could actually be in dealing with certain local school issues. Indeed, the cautious manner in which Bowron and the school inpectors dealt with interpersonal problems and relationships among teachers, trustees, and parents seems to suggest that the government's officers did not always enjoy the absolute authority often attributed to them. Nor were they always as imperious in attitude as popular mythology holds. Problem solving was something to be approached with delicacy and care. "I have just about come to the conclusion," she wrote in 1932, "that the inspectors and myself, when we wish to retire from our present positions will be equal to posts in the Diplomatic Service."

Finally, in chronicling the harsh physical conditions and social isolation that marked the lives of many rural teachers, Bowron's reports help explain the historical context that led to the rise of rural teacher militancy in the 1930s and 1940s and, indeed, that has prompted the larger and continuing struggle by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation to protect teachers' rights. Put another way, the occupational memory that has come to shape the current attitudes and views of teachers as an organized labour force was born in the hardship and struggle of teachers in rural schools that Bowron recorded so graphically. ♦

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Lottie Bowron in old age, 1961.

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HIGHER LEARNING IN PIONEER CANADA, NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK

Cicero on the Frontier

By Patricia Jasen

The history of higher education in English Canada begins with the Loyalists' northward migration in the 1780s. After they had settled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Canadas, leading members of the new communities worked towards the creation of tiny King's Colleges at Windsor and Fredericton, and then later at York. The sense of urgency surrounding this task arose partly because of the shortage of Church of England clergymen in the colonies, and partly from the fear that young men seeking advanced education would depart for universities in the "Revolted Colonies," where they would be exposed to an alien political ideology.

The first of these new colleges was founded at Windsor, Nova Scotia, within a few years of the Loyalists' arrival. Its nearest antecedent was King's College, New York, an Anglican institution which was open for only twenty-two years before being transformed into a military hospital in 1776. The so-called "loyal clergy" who mourned its passing (among them Charles Inglis — the future Bishop of Nova Scotia) were the first men to recommend that a new college be founded in the northern colony. While the curriculum at King's, New York, had been intended to encompass a range of scientific and practical subjects such as navigation, surveying and husbandry, the tendency towards practical learning which was slowly gaining a foothold in the United States was not carried northward during the 1780s. When King's College was reincarnated in Nova Scotia during the following decade, its founders adhered to an older and narrower curricular pattern which concentrated almost exclusively on the classics.

The philosophy of higher learning which was first adopted in British North America was very English in inspiration, in that the governing regulations, curriculum and way of life imposed in its new colleges were patterned after those of eighteenth-century Oxford. The roots of this educational philosophy can be found in what we know of the men (both the Loyalist elite and the British-born) who formed the governing class in the northern colonies at the end of the eighteenth century. The colleges they planned and created were the products of an intense conservatism nurtured by the spectacle of revolution in both North America and France, and by their belief that American democracy was drifting towards political and social anarchy. They attributed such disorder at least partly to weaknesses in the connections between church and state, and were determined to establish institutions which would be a force for conservatism in British North America, just as Oxford and Cambridge were in England.

From the outset, King's at Windsor was specifically intended to serve the members of the Church of England, even though they comprised a minority of the population. The act which founded the college in 1789 stipulated that its president must always be an Anglican clergyman, and later regulations embodied many more aspects of the Oxford model. The Board of Governors determined that all King's professors must be Oxford or Cambridge men — or at least have been educated by such scholars at Windsor itself. In 1802, the new statutes went further, announcing that all those entering the college must sign the Thirty-Nine Articles (encompassing Anglican doctrine) and decreeing that no professor or student might attend any place of worship other than the Church of England or be present "at any seditious or rebellious meetings". The Board of Governors insisted that Oxford University was to be emulated in matters large and small. The statutes even required that, in this pioneer college with two professors and a handful of students, "the Academical habits shall be the same as those which are worn in the University of Oxford, consisting of gowns, caps, hoods and bands, as they are appropriated to each degree, faculty, standing, station, or situation, respectively."

The curriculum was patterned after that of Oxford as well. It is true that, throughout Great Britain and the United States, the classics were still a primary

A winter sports club gathers in front of Dalhousie College, Halifax, 1841.

component of a liberal arts education in the early nineteenth century and were considered essential to the training of clergymen in most denominations, but this concentration was particularly intense at Oxford. Thus Windsor's four-year program was devoted almost exclusively to the classics and, although it could be objected that a two-man faculty could not possibly introduce much latitude into the arts curriculum, it appears that even when their efforts were supplemented by new staff members the program did not alter significantly for many years. Logic and rhetoric, studied through the use of the ancient languages, were the principal subjects in the traditional Oxford curriculum, and so they were at Windsor.

The rationale behind classical studies had not been unchanging over the centuries, however, and their emphasis at King's reflected a philosophy of higher education which had quite recently come into fashion in England. By the late 1700s, the study of classical languages had become the accepted vehicle for passing on standards of "civilized" manners and speech. Cultural activity was concentrated in London, and, out of the multitude of regional dialects, the concept of a standard, polite English was gradually emerging. In the universities, the study of rhetoric became associated with "the cultivation of a pleasant or graceful style" of expression — a style suited to the quality of young man who could afford a liberal education and could expect a place in London society.

At King's College at Windsor, Judge Alexander Croke, an Oxonian and very influential member of the board, adhered to the notion that the college's task was to teach correct manners and speech. He believed that a principal object of King's was to assimilate "the manners of the rising generation to those of the parent state," and he held that it was "of no small importance to this seminary to teach the genuine use, practice, and pronunciation of the English language, which in distant colonies is too apt to degenerate." Cicero and Quintilian were read expressly for the purpose of improving style, and both received a generous portion of the students' time at Windsor.

The King's Colleges at Windsor and at Fredericton, New Brunswick, where a similar philosophy prevailed during the early nineteenth century, were intended to produce Anglican clergymen and English gentlemen.

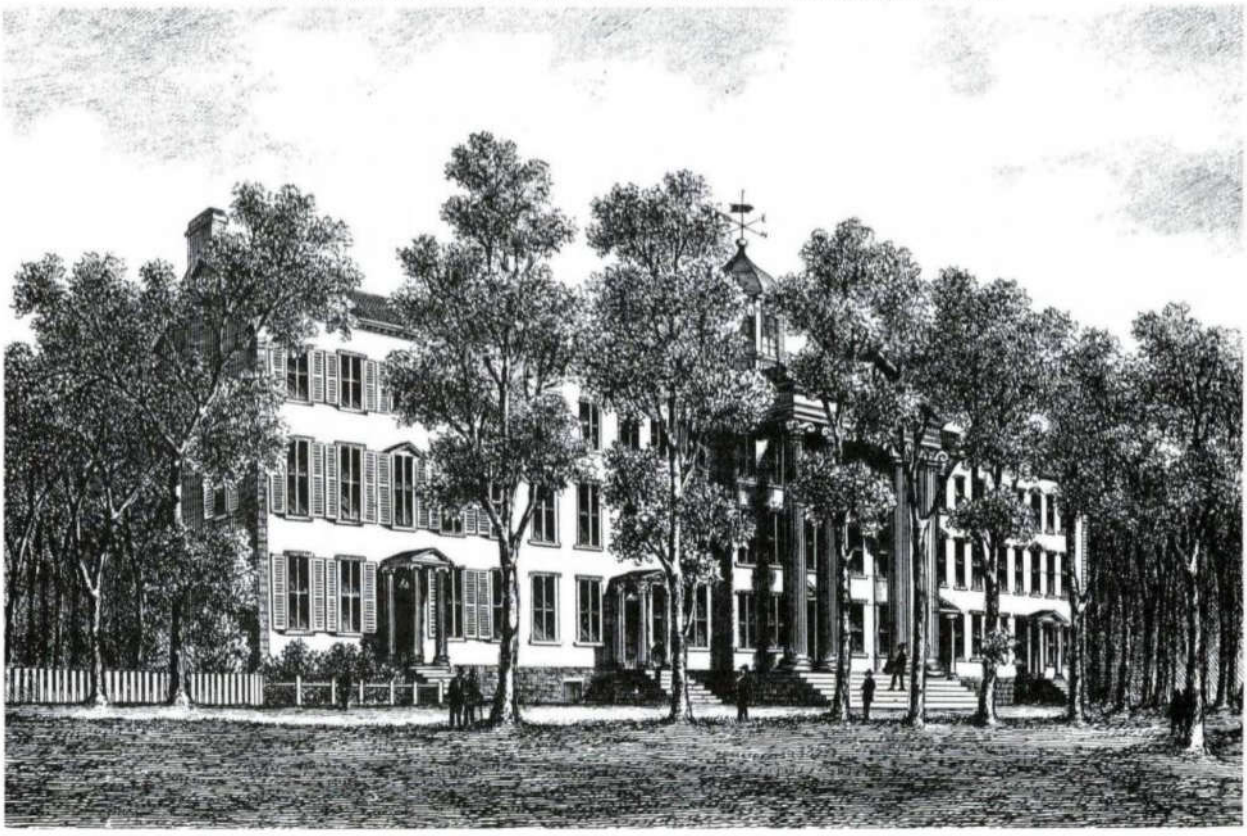
A college for Upper Canada was also planned during the 1790s, but its progress was stalled for several decades. Like Bishop Inglis, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe was eager to found a university as soon as possible. He believed that such an institution would foster, "more than any other source or circumstance whatever, a grateful attachment to His Majesty, morality and religion." A university which would train the governing elite was a key part of Simcoe's vision of Upper Canada as an ideal microcosm of English hierarchical society — the perfection of which, he believed, would ultimately lure sensible Americans back into the British fold. But because authorities in Britain thought that the college scheme was premature, the project lapsed after Simcoe's departure in 1796. He was indirectly responsible, nonetheless, for securing

the land grant which would provide the endowment for a future King's College at Toronto. It was precisely this concentration of privilege in Anglican hands which created bitter denominational strife and delayed the building of any institution of higher learning in Upper Canada for fifty years.

The idea of a university for this frontier community was revived by John Strachan, a member of the Executive Council who would eventually become Bishop of Toronto. Strachan devoted much of his career to promoting what he confidently but erroneously termed "the Established Religion" of Upper Canada and to opposing the various forces of reform in the colony. During the 1820s and 30s, with the War of 1812 fresh in memory and the radical wing of the Upper Canadian reform movement proclaiming its infatuation with Jacksonian politics and the language of revolution, he was certain that an alien, republican philosophy was being spread by American-born schoolmasters and the preachers of dissenting sects. He urgently believed that "the most effectual method of supporting our Establishment is by getting the Education of the rising generation to be placed under the direction and control of the regular clergy." While it was never his intention to exclude students from this new King's College on religious grounds (even Windsor relinquished that right by 1830, in keeping with the emancipation of Roman Catholics in Britain), the institution was to be firmly under Anglican direction and influence.

Strachan's religious conservatism was tempered by a more progressive approach in curricular matters, for he was deeply influenced by his Scottish background. In that country, the arts course was much broader in content, sacrificing some proficiency in classics and mathematics so that philosophy and new branches of science could receive attention. Strachan's belief that science had a part to play in the education of gentlemen was reinforced by the creation of the Church of England's new King's College in London, which attempted to compete with the utilitarian and "godless" University College on Gower Street by offering a broader curriculum in a Christian setting. Strachan may also have seen the wisdom of catering to the growing interest in practical subjects in Upper Canada, and have wanted to undermine one of the reformers' criticisms of Tory educational policy — namely, that it favoured an over-specialized, outmoded and elitist course of study which did little to advance the colony's material well-being. The curriculum he envisioned was to embrace "all useful knowledge," which he defined

King's College, Windsor, Nova Scotia, from "Canadian Illustrated News", September 1877.



as "classical literature, Mathematical and Physical Sciences and Mental Philosophy," and "to be based on our Holy Religion, which ought to be the beginning and the end of an education in a Christian country."

It was a commonplace of the mid-Victorian era in British North America that all secular instruction was to foster and defend the Christian faith, and Strachan spoke for the vast majority in Upper Canada when he placed religion at the centre of a liberal education. He assured the public that any religious teaching would be non-sectarian and entirely acceptable to any student who might choose to attend King's. It would be confined to "a thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in their original languages and no text would be read that was not "admired by all denominations of Christians". The public was aware, however, that overseeing all such instruction would be the Church of England. The college president, Strachan himself, would teach "Moral and Intellectual Philosophy," a subject which included "Christian Ethics and Political Economy". The Reverend Strachan would thus take charge of the course during which social and political opinions were most likely to be formed in the students' minds.

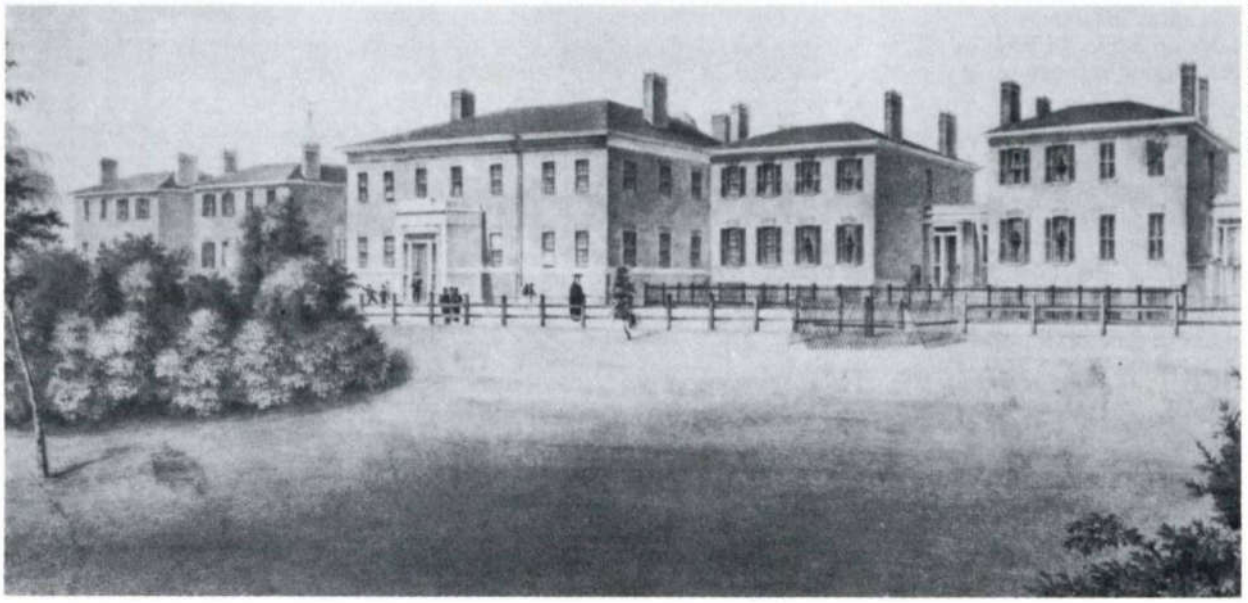
By the time that King's College, Toronto, finally commenced teaching in the 1840s there could have been little doubt that its atmosphere would be as Tory and Anglican as its predecessors' at Windsor and Fredericton, and that, despite the presence of two professors of science, the classics were to retain their supremacy. At the stone-laying ceremony on St. George's Day, 1842, the comparison with Oxford was kept constantly to the fore. Some of the rhetoric may have been calculated to please the representative of the Crown, Sir

National Archives of Canada.

The Rev. Dr. John Strachan undertook the teaching of "moral and intellectual philosophy" himself.

Charles Bagot, who was Chancellor of the new college and an Oxford man himself. His Excellency delivered a speech extolling the contribution that King's would make to life in the colony, and he informed his audience that he had always imagined Oxford and Cambridge to be "the breasts of the mother country," adding, by way of explanation, that they had provided England with "that wholesome and invigorating nutri-

Upper Canada College, Toronto, 1829.



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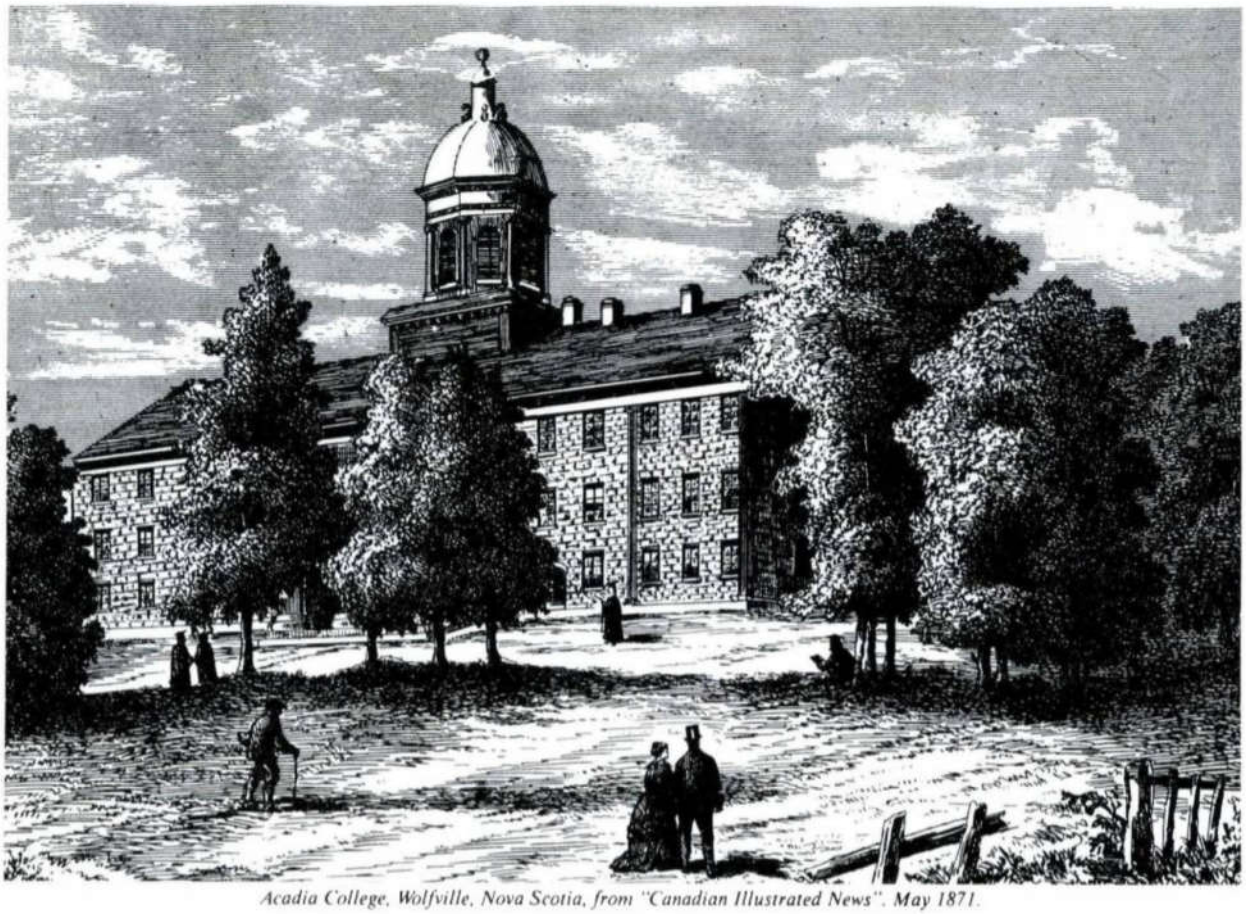

Acadia College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, from "Canadian Illustrated News", May 1871.

ment which has led to her gigantic growth." The tone was sustained by a lad from the seventh form of Upper Canada College, who recited an "ode" proclaiming that at King's "an infant Oxford springs . . . Where once the Indian bow'd/ To idol-gods."

This mood was sustained at the opening ceremony in June of the following year. In their inaugural addresses, Strachan and Vice-president McCaul both expressed their hope that King's would someday be the Oxford of the New World, an asylum of learned leisure "where men of retired habits may taste the sweets of society and yet converse with the illustrious dead."

Once teaching began in 1843, the atmosphere at King's was greatly influenced by the presence of Professor James Beaven, who taught philosophy and natural theology and acted as Dean of Students. He instructed and governed his charges according to his own idealized memories of distant undergraduate days at Oxford. Beaven adhered to a very strict religious and social code: he had no use for religious dissenters and considered "democratical theories" to be incompatible with "an advanced condition of civilization". Students coming to King's would have taken all this in stride, however, as virtually all were products of that other Tory stronghold, Upper Canada College — an English-style preparatory school which attracted the sons of the governing elite.

King's College at Toronto was brought to life in an age preoccupied with reform, and it survived for only six years after instruction began. By mid-century the colonies had become more or less self-governing, and all of the Anglican colleges in British North America were to find their days of privilege numbered as governments newly responsible to the people ousted the Church of England from its position of authority in higher education. Anglican colleges either retained their church connection but slipped from the mainstream of university development, as did King's at Windsor, or they became publicly supported institutions under secular control, as occurred at Toronto and Fredericton. A new educational philosophy would dominate the University of Toronto and the University of New Brunswick, but the origins of that philosophy can be found in the colleges created by the dissenting denominations during the first half of the nineteenth century.

By the 1840s, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and other Christian sects had reacted against the Anglican monopoly in higher education by creating colleges of their own. The establishment of such institutions as Dalhousie, Acadia, Mount Allison, Victoria and Queen's occurred not only because of denominational rivalry but because of differences in political allegiance and educational philosophy. The movement for political reform clearly signified the growing confidence and power of the middle class in British North America, and the campaign for curricular change expressed their need for training suited to middle class occupations and pursuits. Reformers in the first half of the nineteenth century had no wish to eliminate classical learning, but a number of them were determined to loosen its hold on the curriculum and, at the same time, break down the barriers of religion and class which the Oxford model symbolized.

The first institutional reaction to Anglican domination took place in rural Nova Scotia, where a group of Presbyterians, led by the Reverend Thomas McCulloch, founded Pictou Academy. College level instruction began in 1818 but the Academy did not prosper, and Presbyterian efforts in higher education soon became focused on Dalhousie College at Halifax. During the 1830s the denominational colleges multiplied. Dalhousie gave offence to the Baptist community by hiring Presbyterians, which led to the birth of Acadia at Wolfville. The exclusiveness of King's at Fredericton contributed to the founding of Methodist Mount Allison in Sackville. In Upper Canada, the educational gap left by the delays in opening King's was partially filled by Upper Canada College, but because it was dominated by the Church of England and its curriculum was almost exclusively classical, Egerton Ryerson, a leading Methodist clergyman and educator, led in the creation of Upper Canada Academy. This was the forerunner of Victoria College, which opened in 1842, along with Queen's College, whose founders at Kingston were motivated by a "strong repugnance" to the idea of committing their youth to "the charge of those likely to have rule at King's and McGill Colleges for some time to come." Although sectarian rivalries were responsible for increasing the number of new colleges, the most bitter resentment prevailed between the privileged Church of England and the dissenting denominations.

In a parallel fashion, several of the men who helped found new colleges in Upper Canada and the Maritimes were associated with the campaign against oligarchical power. Thomas McCulloch, for example, has been called the intellectual leader of the reform movement in Nova Scotia in its earliest phase and the "Pictou Scribblers" nurtured at his academy played a part in reform leader Joseph Howe's political awakening during the 1820s. In Upper Canada, there were

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Egerton Ryerson: Knowledge "the fruit of labour".

strong links between the moderate reform movement and Methodism. Egerton Ryerson, the foremost spokesman at Victoria College, was a leader in both spheres. One aspect of his battle against the Anglicans' assumption of class superiority was his determination that all men be given access to education in keeping with their abilities. Knowledge, he pointed out, must be recognised as "the *fruit of labour*, and not the *inheritance of descent*." In a similar vein, McCulloch observed that "the time has passed when men considered that rank and wealth entitled them to a monopoly of intelligence."

The link between new colleges and political reform was not present in all cases. The Methodists who founded Mount Allison were not associated with the movement in New Brunswick, nor were the Baptists who created Acadia in Nova Scotia involved in reform politics. The subject is further complicated by the fact that reformers were themselves divided over the issue of higher education, and many, including Joseph Howe and Upper Canada's reform leader, Robert Baldwin, favoured the creation of provincial universities over the proliferation of sectarian colleges. Hence the contest was not merely two-sided — not simply a matter of Tory versus reformer, or Anglican versus dissenter. Instead, the opposition to Tory privilege was split between those who sought an equal share in the revenue from crown lands which the King's Colleges enjoyed but who had no quarrel with church sponsored higher learning, and those who looked forward to the

establishment of secular institutions like the University of London.

The middle class in British North America sought a more practical education for ambitious sons not destined for the professions. They wanted a training equal in status to that offered by the King's Colleges, but one more suited to preparing young men for careers in such fields as commerce and agriculture. Both McCulloch and Ryerson spoke of practical utility as one of the great aims of a higher education. While they were far from being radicals, their arguments had a democratic flavour. Shortly after Victoria College opened, for example, Ryerson published a letter in the *Christian Guardian* (which he edited) expressing his own sentiments concerning the college:

> This institution is emphatically the college of the people . . . a college adapted to the wants of the mass, affording that kind of education, and in that manner, best adapted to make sound, practical men, in every department of life — sound lawyers, sound divines, sound physicians, merchants, mechanics, agriculturalists, and to qualify them for filling the various offices in society with honour to themselves and benefit to the community.

The reformers challenged the eighteenth-century notion that fine manners and eloquent speech were, in themselves, proof of personal morality and worth. For them, virtue was associated with action and community service. McCulloch pointed out that the people of Nova Scotia did not "have the prospect of spending their days in literary retirement." To their considerable credit, they had duties to perform, and "upon those duties, therefore, the system of education should be made to bear." Rather than provide a merely classical training, it would be more profitable — indeed, more virtuous — to provide them with

> an accurate acquaintance with the operations of their own minds, and to teach them to classify their knowledge and communicate their sentiments, and to furnish them with those just views of the various social relations and duties, and that knowledge of mathematical and physical science, which would be everyday useful to the community and honourable to themselves.

Dalhousie's success, he felt, depended upon how well it adapted its course of study to the present needs of the province of Nova Scotia. "If Dalhousie College acquires eminence and success," wrote McCulloch, "it will not be by an imitation of Oxford, but as an institution of science and practical intelligence." Even with respect to the professions, he believed that "the community will join me in affirming that to a lawyer or a clergyman a sound judgement is more valuable than a sackful of words."

"A sackful of words": such a phrase was not the true measure of McCulloch's or Ryerson's estimation of the value of the classical inheritance. Both considered Latin and Greek to be essential to a good education. "Every scholar should possess a moderate knowledge of these languages," conceded McCulloch. "I am by no means an enemy to classical literature, but it ought to have its own place, and that only." Ryerson acknowledged the value of the classics in teaching mental discipline, in encouraging eloquence of expression, and in refining students' tastes, but insisted that "the study of the Classics ought, surely, to be taught and pursued *practically*, as well as every other branch of learning." He objected to classical studies only when they were placed above all other forms of education, and when they were "so taught and studied as to render the English language and the active industry of common life contemptible in the estimation and feelings of the student." Above all, these men resented the class advantage and snobbery that the classical languages symbolized in higher education.

They also had a fairly clear idea in their minds of the kind of learning for which the curriculum must be ready to make way. They were in favour of expanding the role of science in higher education, just as long as it accorded with Christian revelation and was accompanied by lectures in moral philosophy. These would remind the student of his humble place in God's universe, and would counteract any tendency towards intellectual pride that an intimacy with nature's secrets might induce. The King's Colleges had also introduced some scientific studies by the 1840s, but a principal difference between the Church of England curriculum and that planned for such institutions as Victoria and Dalhousie was that the latter was more varied and vocational, and offered, for example, early varieties of applied science and mathematics such as navigation and surveying.

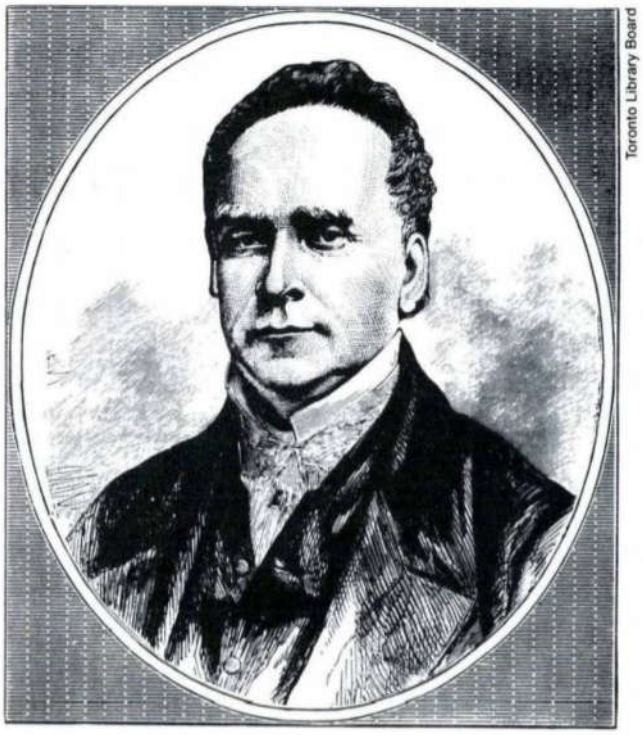
Subjects such as these would identify these institutions as "colleges of the people," and so would the recognition that much of what an educated, cultured person should know could be acquired through the language which he already spoke. Many professed admirers of the classics, Ryerson pointed out, had affected "a sovereign contempt — a contempt very generally the offspring of ignorance — of the study and beauties of the *English* language." He argued that the Greeks and Romans had been most concerned with achieving proficiency in their own languages, and that it did not make sense for Canadians to shun "the language of our firesides, our commerce, our laws, our literature." Ryerson also advocated the study of French, for that subject would be required by "all Canadian youth who are likely to take part in the public affairs of United Canada."

The study of British history was another of Ryerson's enthusiasms. His curriculum was to include the history of England, "embracing a popular view of the rise and progress of the civilization, Learning, Science, Arts and Commerce of Great Britain, and especially her Constitution of Government, and its successive changes and its present state of perfection." Ryerson undoubtedly felt that an education at Victoria College would acquaint young people with the history and culture of the Empire of which they were a part, and that, through the pride and affection thus engendered, these subjects would contribute more to the stability of the social order than could any amount of Latin and Greek.

Although the classics still loomed large at the new denominational colleges, these institutions championed, as a matter of educational policy, a less specialized, more utilitarian approach to higher learning than did the Anglican colleges. In the years leading up to the introduction of responsible government, it was that philosophy which came to dominate public thinking about the function of universities. While Ryerson and other church college leaders would never sanction the secularization of higher education, their emphasis upon useful knowledge for the common man gave impetus to the movement to bring Church of England establishments under state control.

King's College, Toronto, for example, was a source of continuous controversy throughout the 1840s. While it was officially non-denominational, the Bishop of Toronto was president, almost all of its students and faculty were Anglicans, and compulsory chapel was conducted according the Church of England ritual. There remained, in addition, a very real link between the King's curriculum and the college's exclusiveness. The course of study had broadened somewhat, but the classics reigned supreme. The curriculum acted as a class barrier, because the only students likely to matriculate at King's were those from Upper Canada College — an elite, Anglican institution where students devoted themselves to classics and mathematics after the old pattern. With Upper Canada College as its feeder school, King's could set its classical requirement at such a high level that Daniel Wilson (the University of Toronto's first professor of English and History) would later refer to the King's matriculation examination as "the most solemn farce educated men ever attempted to perpetrate in a new country".

Opposition to King's increasingly transcended divisions of party and sect, with many Anglicans and moderate conservatives finding the college's position difficult to support. Robert Baldwin, himself an Anglican, introduced a bill in the legislative assembly during the same year King's opened which called for the establishment of a provincial University of Toronto. Although the bill was abandoned when Baldwin resigned in 1844, the assault upon the college continued. Pressure came from within King's College itself as well, for the high Tory philosophy which was paraded in the opening ceremonies represented only a portion of King's faculty. The traditionalists found themselves opposed by the small scientific and medical contingent, who were attracted to the idea of removing the heavy hand of the church from college affairs and allowing it to move in a more practical and democratic direction.



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Robert Baldwin: A provincial university.

Typical of the "new men" who appeared at a number of colleges in the 1840s was Henry Holmes Croft, first professor of chemistry and experimental science at King's College. Trained in Germany, he came to Canada at the age of twenty-three and stayed for some time with reform leader Francis Hincks, under whose influence he became, according to one historian, "a courageous opponent of the 'Family Compact' group in King's College." Croft was a vigorous advocate of experimental science and of the application of chemistry to the problems of agriculture. He was a leading member of the agricultural and horticultural societies in the district of York and a founder of the Entomological Society of Ontario. With such men as Croft began the long association in Canada between scientific research in the university and its practical use in the community, which was to become a prominent aspect of the secularization process.

When responsible government was granted and the Reform party returned to power in 1848, a bill was finally passed which stipulated that the King's endowment would be turned over to a new body and the old

college would cease to exist. The University of Toronto would be completely under government control. At this point, however, the Oxford model of higher learning was not driven out of Upper Canada but took refuge in a new institution. John Strachan would play no part in watching King's be "destroyed by stolid ignorance and presumption, the voice of prayer and praise banished from its walls." Now in his seventies, he recruited funds in England for Trinity College, where he would recreate as closely as possible the atmosphere and classical curriculum of Oxford in what was, by that time, a bygone era.

The Oxford model had been shifted to the periphery of university development in Upper Canada, and it met the same fate in the other provinces. While King's at Windsor survived as a small church college, its counterpart at Fredericton experienced a transformation similar to that which occurred at Toronto.

Once again, at Fredericton, the curricular issue was central. King's had begun teaching in the 1820s at the college level, and under the presidency of Dr. Edwin Jacob its curriculum had changed little during the course of many years. A graduate of Oxford and an Anglican divine, Jacob linked the survival of true religion at King's to the preservation of the classical course, untainted by vocational studies. The British scientist Sir Charles Lyell wrote of King's in 1852 that it had been "rendered useless and almost without scholars, owing to an old-fashioned Oxonian of Corpus Christi, Oxford, having been made head, and determining that lectures in Aristotle are all that the youth in a new colony ought to study, or other subjects on the strict plan which may get honours at Oxford." Lyell exaggerated somewhat, for, while there was no science taught at King's for many years, chairs in chemistry and natural philosophy were created by 1840 and filled by Scots who would mix practical research with their college duties. Without the approval or the cooperation of the college authorities, they undertook series of public lectures intended to introduce the people of New Brunswick to the material benefits of scientific knowledge.

This growing emphasis upon useful knowledge in the 1840s helped to push King's along the road to secularization. Pressures for reform from within joined forces with public agitation against the college as a Tory stronghold, which was said to provide an impractical form of education which could only serve as "a luxury confined to the aspirations of the few". The campaign for curricular reform was led by the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, Sir Edmund Head, who appointed a reform commission modelled after the body which helped to guide Oxford into the modern world during the 1850s. Its members included Egerton Ryerson and J.W. Dawson, superintendent of education in Nova Scotia and a "protege and disciple" of Sir Charles Lyell. The commission reported that the course of study ought to

> embrace those Branches of Learning which are usually taught in colleges both in Great Britain and the United States — and Special Courses of Instruction adapted to the Agricultural, Mechanical, Manufacturing, and Commercial pursuits and interests of New Brunswick; and that the subjects and modes of Instruction in Sciences and Modern Languages (including English, French and German) should have a practical reference to those pursuits and interests.

Although some of these goals would not be met for many years, the University of New Brunswick Act of 1859 determined that King's would be replaced by a non-denominational teaching university whose destiny would be linked to the practical needs of the people of the province.

By the 1850s, the first phase in the development of higher education in English Canada was over, although the competition between institutions entered a new phase as universities and colleges vied for government funding. Their rivalry would no longer, however, reflect the kind of class antagonism or sectarian hatreds that had surrounded their earlier history. The remaining church colleges, such as Victoria or Queen's, might struggle bitterly and unsuccessfully to obtain their due portion of the provincial university's endowment, but the secularization process which affected all centres of higher learning in the latter half of the nineteenth century would gradually push religious differences well into the background. The question of class became even less significant. As Canadian universities, like those in other industrialized countries, were transformed into centres of applied research and professional training, they embraced an ideal of community service designed to engender public trust and curry government favour. University spokesmen eschewed elitist rhetoric, even though the population these institutions served remained relatively small and predominantly middle class. By the turn of the century English-Canadian universities had, in fact, developed a highly standardized philosophy of higher education, although the memories of ancient quarrels and the careful guarding of pet traditions would continue to provide each with an exaggerated yet agreeable sense of its own uniqueness. ♦

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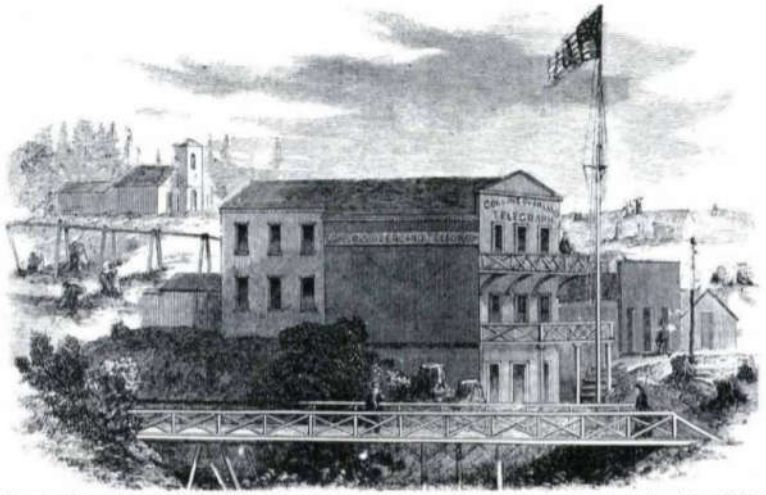
Romance of the Telegraph

By Boyce Richardson

CONTINENTAL DASH
The Russian-American Telegraph
By Rosemary Neering. Horsdal & Schubart Publishers Ltd., Ganges, British Columbia, 1989. 240 pp., illus. $22.95.



Terminal station of Collins' Overland Telegraph, New Westminster, British Columbia, 1865.

I've wanted to visit Telegraph Creek in northern B.C. ever since I read the diary written by American novelist Edward Hoagland of his summer there in 1966. Telegraph Creek was the furthest-north depot established in B.C. when the attempt was made in the 1860s to build a telegraph line from the United States to Europe by way of Russia. In 1966 it was accessible only by boat up the Stikine River, and was inhabited by a fascinating bunch of old-timers. The story of the telegraph seemed a kind of romantic one, which I had always wanted to know more about, and it is gratifying to have my curiosity now satisfied by Rosemary Neering's book.

The tale she tells is, indeed, a minor epic. In 1857 an American entrepreneur, Cyrus Field, decided he would reduce the communication time between Europe and America from one month to one second by laying a telegraph cable across the Atlantic between Ireland and Newfoundland. He raised a million dollars to have 335,000 miles of cable manufactured, and the first attempt to lay the cable was made in July of that year. The cable end was lost, however, 300 miles out in the Atlantic, and a second attempt in June 1858 also failed. Two months later, Field succeeded in having a cable laid over the entire ocean, and it worked for four weeks before mysteriously falling silent. It seemed that Cyrus Field had failed, and other entrepreneurs began to think of other ways of achieving the same dream.

By 1864 President Lincoln had been persuaded to approve a right-of-way for the American portion of a cable to be laid north from San Francisco, through British Columbia and Alaska, across the Bering Strait, and so overland to Moscow, and thence Europe.

A businessman called Perry Collins breathed life into this improbable scheme with eight years of unremitting work, repeated trips to Russia, and intensive business and political lobbying in the United States, through all of which he persuaded Hiram Sibley, head of Western Union, to put up most of the money.

Collins hired Charles S. Bulkley (whose name survives in the Bulkley River in B.C.) as his engineer, and a Captain Edward S. Conway was sent to British Columbia to take charge of construction of the first leg of the proposed line. Conway was obviously a superb organizer, and as early as the summer of 1865 he succeeded in having the line built inland along the Fraser to Hope and Yale, and northward as far as Quesnel.

North of Quesnel was unknown territory, and a good deal of time was spent by Conway and others in trying to establish the most effective onward route for the line. The early construction was relatively easy, for they had been able to use the roadways built to serve the gold rushes into the Cariboo district.

While all this was being achieved so expeditiously by Conway's teams in B.C., other groups dispatched by Bulkley to Siberia were having a rather harder time. Indeed it seems clear that if the rude conditions of the Siberian east coast had been properly understood, the scheme would probably never have been launched.

The Russian authority in that remote area was somewhat eccentric and sketchy, and the telegraphic explorers were not able to get going until December, when winter had

already closed in on them. Ms. Neering has uncovered a multitude of details of the harrowing experiences the various Siberian parties suffered: they were certainly devoted to the tasks before them, but they never really succeeded in carrying out any of them. In fact, they underwent appalling hardships as they trudged, mostly on foot, across the frozen steppe. At one place they even managed to put up some poles. But they never did succeed in establishing a final route for the proposed cable.

In the summer of 1865, as Conway was building the cable up through B.C., Cyrus Field once more put to sea, seven years after his previous attempt to lay a trans-Atlantic cable had failed. Once again, the attempt failed, so Western Union was encouraged to hope that their scheme might yet prove viable.

In the early months of 1866, Conway's teams carried their explorations north as far as the Stikine country. Conway decided to follow a route along Burns and Decker lakes, and between May and October he and his men built 440 miles of roads, and erected 378 miles of telegraph line, for which they put up more than 9,200 poles.

While the Russian expeditions kept on exploring, and Conway building in B.C., Cyrus Field again put to sea in 1866, to make a final effort to lay the trans-Atlantic cable. This time it succeeded when the cable was brought ashore on 28 July in the tiny fishing village of Heart's Content in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. "It is a great work," wrote the *Times* of London, "a glory to our age and nation, and the men who have achieved it deserve to be honoured among the benefactors of their race."

Conway's B.C. team learned of the Atlantic success by their own telegraph in August, but no order to stop work came until October. The supplies that had been taken up the Stikine from the coast, to establish a forward depot at Telegraph Creek were then transported back to Wrangell.

Western Union cancelled the Russian-American project early in 1867, but the Siberian teams did not get advice of the cancellation until the following July. The leader of one of those teams, George Kennan (an ancestor of the famous U.S. diplomat of our own day) learned of the success of the Atlantic cable when a visiting whaler from New Bedford showed him copies of San Francisco papers that were already publishing the same day's news received directly by cable from London. Kennan sold off the supplies he had on hand, but he refused to return home when the company did send a ship to pick him up, preferring to make his way back, adventurously, through Russia.

Ms. Neering has written an interesting and readable account of a bizarre failure, a fascinating sidebar, as it were, to the history of the British Columbia interior. The book has excellent maps which enable one to follow the action as it unfolds, something that, unfortunately, not all maps in books succeed in doing.

Boyce Richardson is an Ottawa writer and filmmaker.

A Soldier Remembers

By Jeffrey Anderson

ONCE A PATRICIA

By C. Sydney Frost. Vanwell Publishing Ltd., St. Catharines, 1989. 564 pp., illus. $29.95.

Once a Patricia, with its titular implication "always a Patricia," precisely describes the author's deep devotion to a famous regiment, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (P.P.C.L.I.). This gripping account, told in the first person, of a Canadian officer's experience during World War II has been highly praised by a number of military authorities, whose opinions command respect.

As a personal wartime odyssey, this book has been favourably compared with those two famous autobiographies from World War I, namely, Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* and Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer.*

While acknowledging the high quality and compelling narrative style of Col. Frost's story of regimental service, during which he was twice grievously wounded, I would not put this heroic tale on quite such a high literary plane.

Yet, having said that, *Once a Patricia* does bear many of the qualities of those two riveting descriptions of trench warfare.

Col. Frost's story has other attributes that set it apart. The first is, of course, that it is very much a Canadian tale; another is that it bears every indication of a once-in-a-lifetime effort to set the record straight, in fact to tell this fascinating narrative "exactly as it was".

By means of a well kept diary, a host of personal and official letters, plus familiarity with other chronicles of the war, the author draws his personal recollections (he claims his memory has improved with time) of the P.P.C.L.I. and their significant role in the campaigns in Sicily, Italy and eventually North West Europe.

The author displays a good deal of humour, insight and sensitivity to his subject, even when the situations

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he finds himself in are at times desperate or particularly frustrating.

The story begins at the Royal Military College at Kingston where Col. Frost receives his initial training and continues through a variety of training centres in Canada and Britain.

Centre stage is the gruelling, bitterly fought Italian campaign so often dismissed by military historians as a side show. Because of serious wounds and several bouts of malaria, Col. Frost missed several of the major engagements, yet his account is so well supported by access to regimental records and his concern for the regiment's fortunes, that he is able to round out the story with a mixture of first hand evidence and documentary detail concerning leadership, staff planning and tactics.

The book is essentially a personal odyssey yet the author is fulsome in telling of the gallant exploits of his fellow officers while sensitive to the ordeals endured by private soldiers.

Nor is the politics of war left out. He recounts a dismal and appalling fact that many of the Canadian regiments were continually going into battle seriously under-strength. The then Minister of National Defence, J. L. Ralston, was made aware of the problem. It led him to demand conscription and that ultimately led to his being relieved of his post by the Prime Minister, Mackenzie King. "Col. Ralston had his principles and stood by them. How different was Mackenzie King's ambivalent stand on all issues — conscription if necessary, but not necessarily conscription."

Throughout the narrative the reader is made aware of the author's great pride in the regiment's history and its accomplishments. There is a refreshing sense of candour giving credit where it is due even to the point of defending senior officers who in the author's view had been unfairly criticized and relieved of command.

A striking example of Col. Frost's zealous loyalty to his regiment was his discovery, while visiting Holland in 1985, that credit for a successful assault by the P.P.C.L.I. in taking the Dutch village of Wilp in April 1945 was somehow mistakenly attributed to another regiment.

Frost was incensed that the P.P.C.L.I. were not properly credited with the action in which he was a company commander. He went to great lengths "to restore the names of these battles to their rightful owners — the Patricias."

The book is lucidly written; some of the battle descriptions literally crackle with action. It is always an absorbing story, often an exciting one, and will add a new dimension to the history of a number of important engagements in which the Patricias took part.

There are a lot of interesting photographs and some excellent maps. The book will be of great value to those who wish a more detailed knowledge of the Patricia's contribution to Canada's struggle to defeat the forces of darkness.

Jeffrey Anderson was a militia officer with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. He recently retired from the School of Journalism at the University of Western Ontario, London.

Popular / Academic

By J.M. Bumsted

As most readers of *The Beaver* are doubtless aware, there exists a substantial and possibly growing gap between those practitioners of history that are regarded as "popular" and those who are labelled "academic". These terms are difficult to define and certainly are not completely satisfactory alternatives, although they are better than distinctions between amateurs and professionals or local historians and national ones. Popular and academic are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and occasionally the book comes along that manages to prove acceptable to both the general and the academic readership. But such books are hard to find, and likely to become more so, less because the standards for popular acceptance have changed than because those for academic excellence keep moving in a direction totally contradictory to popular readability.

It is easy enough to be flippantly critical of the scholarly monograph, and this reviewer has often enough engaged in the exercise. It is considerably less attractive to defend the current assumptions of academic scholarship and publication in history, although there is a case to be made for the scholarly monograph, on which the popular historian often relies or ought to rely. Academic scholars ought to be both pleased and satisfied that their work makes it into the public mainstream through popularization, although the recent protracted debate between Peter C. Newman and some of the academic community suggests that while scholars can resent popularization, popularizers in their turn resent not being accepted as academic scholars. Oh well. No historian ought to be surprised to learn that people can behave in curious ways.

The gulf between popular and academic history has widened over the past ten years, not because of the Newman debate but because of the underlying issues of that controversy. The general reader still wants what he/she has always demanded of history: a readability and accessibility based upon anecdotal narrative and lively characterization. Only certain subjects (or at least, certain approaches to certain subjects) respond well to these requirements. Those subjects and approaches can, broadly speaking, be referred to as "masculine" in nature, because war, commerce, and politics — the principal traditional subjects that lend themselves to anecdotal narrative — have long been the preserve of males. Most of the subjects of the modern academy — in social and economic history — are less susceptible to the principles

of anecdotal narrative, and the academic historian increasingly has rejected both anecdote and narrative as unsystematic and unrevealing. The general reader is unaware of and does not care about the intensive debate that has occurred within the academy over the twin questions of the anecdote and the narrative, but they have taken place. The most promising development within the academy for a return to anecdotal narrative is a relativistic movement that regards virtually all scholarship outside the hard sciences (and much within it) as a conjuring trick involving intellectual sleight of hand that will not stand up to the long-enshrined principles of scientific enquiry. If historical scholarship is indeed a pack of tricks, then why not narrative ones? This movement is not likely to curry favour with general readers who insist on being enlightened at the same time that they are entertained, however.

Historical Essays on Upper Canada, subtitled "New Perspectives" has been edited by J. K. Johnson and Bruce G. Wilson to showcase some of the new shorter monographs available on the early history of Ontario. It supplants an earlier 1975 volume with the same title, and is probably intended chiefly for use as a supplementary textbook in university courses in early Canadian history. The editors in a brief introduction point out that any notion that Ontario's history has been neglected (relative to other regions) is certainly denied by this collection. More significantly, they admit (or confess) that "students will find the present selection of essays somewhat more challenging than was true of the essays in the previous collection", observing there is less narrative description and more quantitative analysis of groups based on aggregate data rather than of individuals. Curiously enough, the editors also argue that despite the new direction of the historiography the subfields of women and working class history remain "underdeveloped". To some extent this argument represents editorial justification for the selection included, but it is probably not unfair. There is also much more theory here than in 1975, although much of it is methodological rather than substantive and a good deal of the substance reflects variations and reconsiderations of a neo-Marxist insistence on the manipulation of the state by its leaders to achieve "social control" over the lower orders. Between 1975, when the concept of social control was unusual and avant garde in academic historical circles, to 1989, when what is revisionist is to deny its universal applicability, much water has obviously flowed under the historiographical bridge.

This lot of Upper Canadian essays are not only hard reading but cut against the grain of what the average Canadian likes to think about the past. Canadian academic historians have not only joined other intellectuals and artists in becoming inaccessible, they have also chosen to become increasingly "critical," a term which in academic circles operates on several levels. Critical ostensibly means profoundly analytic, but it also means more negatively judgmental and censorious. Not only are newer interpretations advanced, but older ones are consigned to the scrap-heap as "myths". Like most such collections of essays, this one has no index. Nonetheless, this volume offers a useful introduction to and overview of the new academic style in history, which is doubtless what its editors intended.

Patricia Roy's *A White Man's Province* is, as its subtitle suggests, a study of the relationship of British Columbia politics and Oriental immigration in the years before the first World War. Roy's central arguments are twofold: first, that most studies of race in Canada's westernmost province have neglected the economic and political context, and secondly, when those contexts are taken into account, economic interests were as important as racial ones in explaining the popular hostility to the Asians. Whether racial atti-

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HISTORICAL ESSAYS ON UPPER CANADA

Edited by J.K. Johnson and Bruce G. Wilson. Oxford University Press, Don Mills, Ontario, 1989. 604 pp. $19.95.

A WHITE MAN'S PROVINCE
British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914

By Patricia Roy. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1989. 326 pp. illus. $37.95.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN CANADA, 1896-1914

By John A. Eagle. McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal 1989. 325 pp., illus. $34.95.

THE TEMAGAMI EXPERIENCE
Recreation, Resources and Aboriginal Rights in the Northern Ontario Wilderness

By Bruce W. Hodgins and Jamie Benidickson. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1989. 370 pp. illus. $45 (cloth), $18.95 (paper).

NATIONALISM, CAPITALISM AND COLONIZATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY QUEBEC
The Upper St. Francis District

By J.I. Little. McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal, 1989. 306 pp. illus. $34.95.

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tudes have been conditioned chiefly by social or economic circumstances is one of the hottest questions within the academy. Roy's book is a dense one, closely argued and thoroughly documented. There is a good deal of repetition, although it is through the accumulation of evidence that a case such as Roy's is made and argued. The book is particularly strong on newspaper comment over the years, although it does not rely exclusively on the press for its documentation. *A White Man's Province* is not an easy read, but an essential one for anybody truly concerned to understand Canadian history between Confederation and World War I.

John Eagle's *The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Development of Western Canada* continues the ongoing saga of the fascination of Canadian scholars — especially those interested in western colonization between Confederation and the Great War — with railway history. Over the long haul since 1867, railroads are probably no more important a means of transportation than automobiles and trucks, but while there is a shelf full of studies on western railroads in any good library, one searches in vain for a decent history of either the automobile or the trucking industry. In fairness to Eagle, his analysis revolves around more than the railroad as transportation, and he views the CPR as a critical player in the economic development of the West, particularly in the years between 1896 and 1914. Much of the relatively unfamiliar ground covered by Eagle deals with the CPR as a land developer — the author sees this facet of the company as separate from its carrying strategies — and particularly as resource developer. Railways are probably intrinsically more accessible than racism, and this book is written with a stronger narrative flow and less detailed analysis than the Roy volume. Its strongest feature is its ability to use the CPR as a connecting link between disparate kinds of western development.

The Temagami Experience is an important regional study that illustrates the ways in which sensitive scholars can make major statements within limited geographical confines. The Temagami Forest Reserve was originally set aside by the Ontario government to provide sustained yield forestry, utilizing the best ideas of conservation management at the turn of the century. The authors have too much sense to try to make the Temagami out to be the quintessential northern wilderness area, but its history and their focus on "Recreation, Resources, and Aboriginal Rights" — as the subtitle has it — could pretty well stand as the familiar wilderness scenario in Canada. Native people became trapped between the contradictory pressures of resource development and recreational demands. While resources and recreation conflicted, so too did the interests of sportsmen and cottagers, residents and outsiders. As the authors note, the clash of interests prevented any single pattern of dominance (except perhaps over the Indians) from emerging in the Temagami, but also inhibited planning. They are particularly hard on the Ontario government's sustained yield policies, which have ranged over the years from misguided to ineffective. Hodgins and Benidickson have an agenda, but they appreciate that there is no need to wear it on their sleeves. The story does, indeed, speak for itself. As academic history goes, this book is engagingly written.

Simultaneously the most important and least accessible of the books considered herein is J. I. Little's *Nationalism, Capitalism, and Colonization in Nineteenth-Century Quebec*. Only the most dedicated of readers could possibly get by an intimidating opening chapter, replete with its exposures of the limitations of other interpretations unfamiliar to all but the experts, an approach so characteristic of the academic approach. The situation is complicated by the fact that Little seems to be focussing on French-Canadian colonization movements, when what he is really interested in is a far more general topic: nineteenth-century agriforestry, the relationship between agriculture and timbering so common to many regions of Canada. What Little has found is a region where farming and logging co-existed uneasily but never produced a fully mixed economy. The complexities of the relationship, exacerbated but not controlled by the fact that it existed in Quebec, are the subject of the book. Given both the ubiquity and centrality of agriforestry in the nineteenth-century Canadian experience, this book is required reading for anyone attempting to understand that experience.

To some extent, the books discussed above are endangered species. Monographs in the academic tradition published in Canada about Canada have very small press runs and tiny audiences. Most of the copies printed find their way into libraries. On one level, it is quite possible to conceive of an alternate technology producing a different distribution arrangement. Publication "on line" in computer data banks is now quite feasible, and it is unlikely that many will come forward to complain that the result is user-unfriendly. The principal objection to such reform would probably come from the authors rather than the consumers. But those authors' views need to be taken into account, since history cannot continue to change and develop without their contributions. Although it might not immediately be discernible, popular history would eventually stagnate without the infusion of new ideas, insights, and evidence from the academic community. Symbiotic understanding rather than open conflict between the two camps would be most desirable.

J.M. Bumsted is Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

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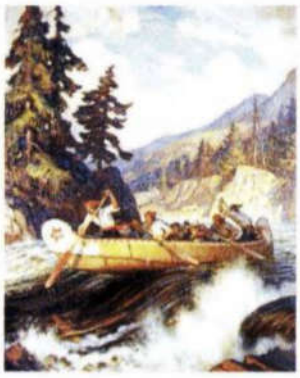

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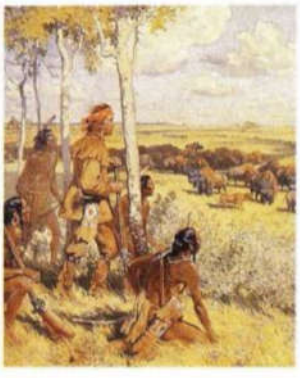

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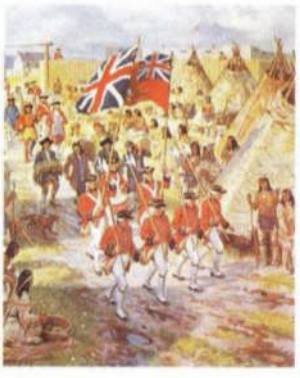

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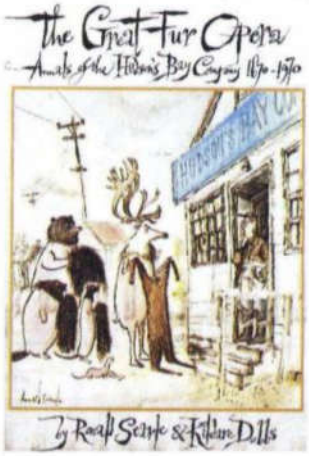

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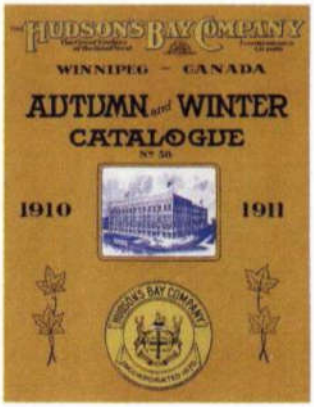

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The Organized Man

Is Jack Granatstein Canada's most prominent historian? There he is on "The Journal" dissecting Pierre Trudeau one night, explaining the Dieppe raid another. There he is on the radio condemning Brian Mulroney. There he is in *Maclean's* recalling how he marched against the War Measures Act in 1970 but came to approve of it. Public events hardly seem complete until the press seeks out Granatstein's views.

Media moments are not the half of it. Few publishing seasons pass without a new Granatstein book. With an array of co-authors, he produces scholarly studies, illustrated histories, handbooks, "instant" journalism, and polemical essays at a rate better than one a year. Last fall, he outdid himself. His name graced the covers of no less than three substantial books — one each on counterspying, Trudeau's foreign policy, and wartime internees.

He also keeps up a full teaching load in the History Department of York University, and he pours forth reviews and articles. Jack Granatstein, in fact, is beginning to make the legendarily prolific Pierre Berton, with his book every two years, look lazy.

What makes Granatstein so productive? He claims he is a fairly lazy man who doesn't work long hours and likes to make time to read novels. He attributes much of his success to being well-organized. And he knows where the organization comes from. He was "just an ordinary city kid" in Toronto, he says, until he became a cadet officer at Royal Military College in Kingston. "At RMC you had to do the military routine — shine your boots and march the parade ground — and still carry a full academic load at the same time. It was more than anyone could do in a day — unless you got organized. I got organized, and I have been organized ever since."

Instead of running infantry companies, Granatstein put his RMC skills to the production of history books. Five years after leaving there in 1961, he was a professor with a Ph.D. and his first published book. "It was quite a shock to me when I arrived at York and a colleague said to me, 'Well, you have your dissertation published, you don't have to worry about publishing any more.' I always knew I was going to be a publishing historian."

Jack Granatstein

This article on York University historian J.L. Granatstein is the first in a series on Canadian historians of the present day which will appear in *The Beaver* from time to time. Christopher Moore is a writer of history himself and a keen observer of the Canadian history scene.

Thirty books later, it is clear that Granatstein is not just a prolific writer, but the latest in a long line of historian-pundits. Despite the furious battles over "trivializing" popularizers and "boring" academics, there have always been history professors who emerge from the ivory tower to explain Canada to Canadians. *Canadian Forum* made Frank Underhill the gadfly of the 1930s, and *Maclean's* made Donald Creighton the 1960s scourge of Liberalism and Quebec. Now television is making the genial, curly-haired Granatstein an all-purpose guru on the historical side of current affairs.

He enjoys the role. On television — and in person — he is cheerful and unintimidating, but his opinions are pungent. He questions whether the internment of Japanese-Canadians in 1942 was so wholly unjustified as we have come to believe. He hoots at expedient multiculturalism ("Who will Mulroney apologize to next — the German soldiers Canadians killed in World War II?"). He mocks the inadequacies of our education system ("Forty thousand students at York! Get it down to 10,000 and you could have a good university.") He remains unliberated enough to refer to one of his academic colleagues as "a nice young girl but. . . ." At the

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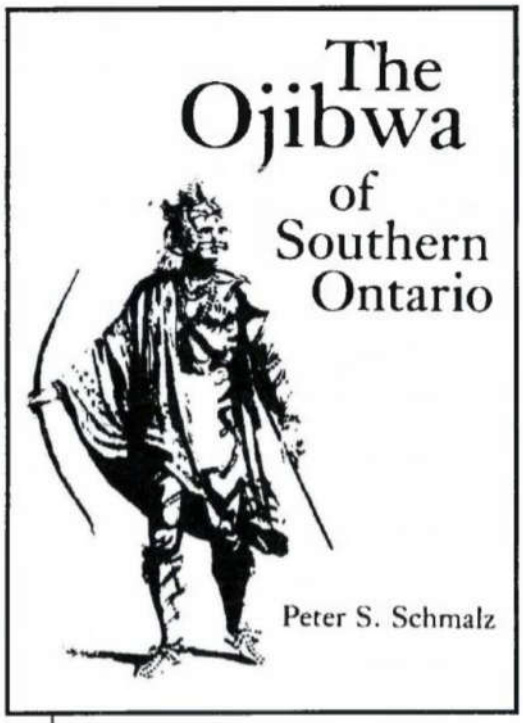

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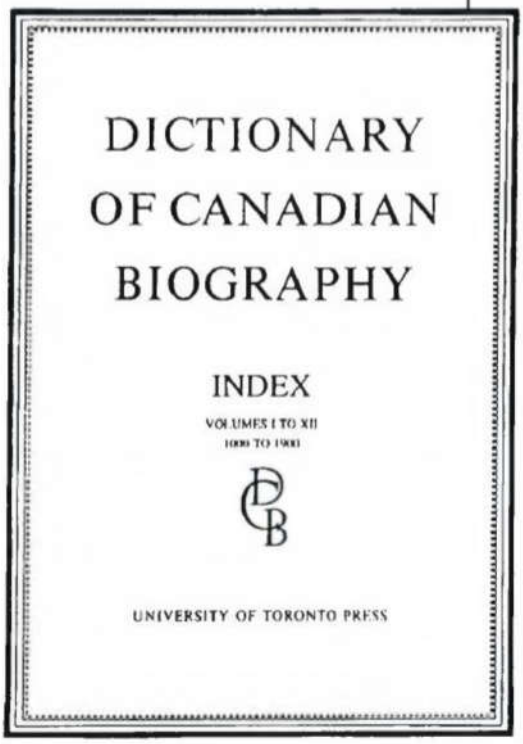

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same time he professes support for most of the social policy of the NDP.

Granatstein thinks more than his strong opinions keeps the media coming back to him. He thinks historians are still the right people to explain Canadians to themselves. "We have that historical background to put things in context." Historians do a better job, he says, "because they have that training to synthesize, to present clearly, as well as to explain where things come from."

And he thinks historians have influence: "The Meech Lake Accord — I think we played a big part in generating opposition to it," says Granatstein. "Historians in English Canada were almost unanimous against Meech Lake. Even those who were ready to grant Quebec all its demands agreed that Meech Lake was impossibly decentralist. When Brian Mulroney gave every province what Quebec wanted, that made it impossible to have a country."

Journalist Andrew Cohen, who covered the Meech Lake debate for his book *A Deal Undone*, agrees that historians sparked the opposition to the constitutional accord. "They brought their sense of the country, their historical sense of it, to the deal — and found it wanting," recalls Cohen. "Along with Pierre Trudeau's attack, their opposition built that school of doubt about it that developed in the country. Early on, what Granatstein, Ramsay Cook, Michael Bliss, and others said helped break Meech Lake's intellectual credibility."

Do Granatstein's fellow historians cheer on his influence and celebrity? Not all of them. Some merely envy his success. (And his connections. Few scholars could persuade External Affairs to spend $30,000 screening and declassifying documents, as it recently did for *Pirouette*, Granatstein and Robert Bothwell's study of Trudeau's foreign policy.) But there is a deeper

split. These days every history department has its complement of "new" social historians. Often they are committed to feminism, multiculturalism, and other targets of Jack Granatstein's sceptical gaze. In return, they wage war against the "old" political history of prime ministers, generals, and national railways — precisely the kind of history Granatstein practices so successfully. As he becomes more prominent, "Granatstein-type history" becomes a shorthand for all the "new" historians reject.

Granatstein remains undismayed. He insists that the history of Canada, "a country artificially created," must always be essentially political. And he doubts the new historians pose much challenge to his public role. "Really who cares about the history of housemaid's knee in Belleville in the 1890s? And the way they write — trying to make historians sound like economists or political scientists guarantees no one will listen to them."

Since Granatstein writes on recent events and (unlike most historians) can often interview his subjects, he borders on the territory of journalists — 180 interviews went into *Pirouette*. But Granatstein is cautious about what he draws from them. "I don't really believe interviews. They are good for attitude, for colour, for how someone felt. But 'old men forget'. I like to test interview material against the archives." It is another instance, he thinks, of the value of what historians do best. "Most journalists are trained to think in 500-word stories. Not the good ones of course, but too many just have not got the training to use archival material. Even checking quotes with two or three people, they are still just writing down what people tell them."

Still, journalism intrigues him. He sometimes thinks he would enjoy writing a newspaper column, and he is already practiced in instant analysis — and in changing his views when predictions go awry. In *Sacred Trust?* (1986), Granatstein and his co-authors, David Bercuson and William Young, dismissed Brian Mulroney as another one-term Tory leader, a blip in history. Today, Granatstein has changed his tune.

"Mulroney will have had more influence than any other prime minister for a very long time — including Trudeau." Granatstein is now ready to admit Mulroney has a vision for the country. "I think it's a destructive one, but it's a vision — or something — that said we're strong, we don't need a strong government, we don't need barriers against American influence, we can scrap all these protections. Whereas I think you need those constraints. Trudeau was trying to prop things up, and Mulroney only wanted to knock them down. And that's proven a lot easier."

During the 1988 federal election Granatstein urged rejection of the Free Trade Agreement. Yet his position was — and remains — hedged. At the height of the debate, Granatstein gave a series of lectures with the deliberately melodramatic title: "How Britain's Economic, Political and Military Weakness Forced

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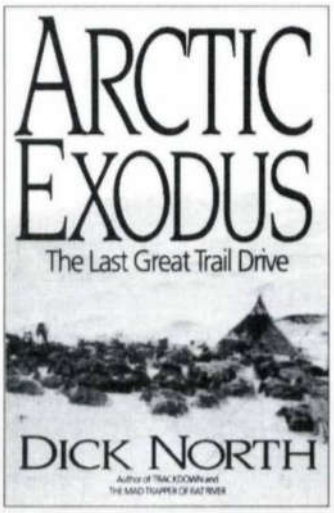

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Canada into the Arms of the United States." In them, he demolished the thesis that the Americanization of Canada in the twentieth century was an evil plot by Mackenzie King and other continentalist traitors.

Instead, argued Granatstein, the steady harmonization of foreign policy, military planning, and economic affairs across the forty-ninth parallel has been the natural consequence of the long, steady decline of Britain as a counterweight to American influence. Granatstein seemed to imply that Canadian integration into the United States was inevitable. At the height of the Free Trade debate, that was hardly a view calculated to please the Coalition Against Free Trade.

Then why oppose free trade? "This particular deal was a very bad one," he says. "Mulroney set out three conditions, all essential, and he got none of them.

"But I also thought the psychological impact was bad. Part of what kept this country non-American was thinking we were not American. And this economic merging knocked one prop out from under that. It weakens the nation."

Two years later, he is no convert, but he remains unwilling to join the prophets of doom. "The verdict is not in on Free Trade yet. Most of the indicators so far support my position, but the recession complicates things. I think we have to wait a while."

Perhaps a Granatstein book on Free Trade is — like the deal itself — nearly inevitable. But it too will have to wait a while. He is teaching a new course this year and starting a new book called *Generals*, about the Canadian commanders in World War II. "And a textbook on Canadian-American relations with Norman Hillmer. And David Bercuson and I have a manuscript. And I'm editing some conference papers. And. . . ."

As a visitor leaves the nineteenth-century rowhouse in midtown Toronto where he and his family have lived for 25 years, Granatstein heads back toward the well-organized personal archives he has been steadily assembling in his attic study. Once a developer threatened the street — and Granatstein wrote a book about that too.

Christopher Moore is the author of "Louisbourg Portraits" (Macmillan of Canada 1982) and "The Loyalists" (Macmillan of Canada 1984). He lives in Toronto.

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A J.L. Granatstein Library — a *partial* list of recent examples of the Granatstein style:

Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Policy (1990). A scholarly study co-authored with Robert Bothwell. "Never once in his long tenure did Pierre Trudeau fail to capitivate the country with the illusion of change."

Spy Wars: Espionage and Canada from Gouzenko to Glasnost (1990). Canadian counter-espionage and undercover activities, co-authored with David Stafford.

Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War (1990). Co-authored with Patricia E. Roy, Masako Lino and Hiroko Takamura. Granatstein: "I went on a Canadian Studies junket to Japan and I said, let's work together. By the end of the day they had worked up the whole project."

A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War (1989). Co-authored with Desmond Morton. Part of a two-volume words-and-pictures story of the two World Wars. Granatstein has a volume on Canada's other twentieth-century conflicts in progress.

The Collins Dictionary of Canadian History (1988). A handbook of dates and events, co-authored with David Bercuson. Granatstein: "My agent Stan Colbert got us a big advance from Collins. Then he became publisher there, and he's stuck with all the unsold copies!"

Canada 1957-67: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (1986). The final volume of The Centenary Series history of Canada.

Sacred Trust? Brian Mulroney and the Conservative Party in Power (1986). Co-authored with David Bercuson and William Young. Granatstein: "We thought Mulroney was going to be a one-term blip. Now he's a two-term disaster."

The Great Brain Robbery: Canada's Universities on the Road to Ruin (1984). Co-authored with Robert Bothwell and David Bercuson. "This book is a polemic; we admit this at once and without reservation."

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THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

The Notorious Zimmerman

This letter refers to Ian C. Johnson's interesting article, "Nightmare on the Great Western" [*The Beaver*, December 1990/January 1991].

In the article, the author mentions that one of the victims of the tragedy was Samuel Zimmerman. This man was a railway contractor from the Niagara area, one of the richest men in Canada, owning his own bank, a hotel, mills and steamboats. Hence, the lavish nature of his funeral is not surprising. An important fact which is omitted is that he was the contractor who had built the Great Western Railway's Desjardins bridge. As there were allegations at the time, mentioned in the article, that inferior materials had been used, Zimmerman's death was seen by many to have been no more than poetic justice.

J.K. Johnson, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Second Edition, p. 2,359) says of Zimmerman, born in Pennsylvania on 17 March 1815: ". . . he was notorious for his free-wheeling business methods and political connections . . . he acquired the contracts, in some cases through the use of bribery, to build the eastern division of the Great Western, the Cobourg and Peterborough, the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton railways . . ."

Zimmerman's most spectacular failure, fortunately not involving loss of life, was the building of a five-kilometre-long wooden trestle over Rice Lake on the Cobourg & Peterborough Railway, which was carried away by ice during the first winter (1854-55) in which it was in operation. The respected Canadian engineer Walter Shanly had suggested an earth embankment.

Stevens, in his history of *Canadian National Railways*, (Vol. 1, Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1960) writes that Zimmerman "was a dominating figure faithful to one principle: what he wanted he was prepared to pay for . . . It is a matter of opinion whether he served Canada well or ill; what is certain is that he set the ethical standards of the first Canadian railway era and they were low standards indeed."

Omer Lavallée,
Emeritus Corporate Historian and Archivist, Canadian Pacific Limited, Montreal, Quebec.

Main Floor, Front Door

As a long time reader of your magazine, I was happily surprised to see a photo of a face well known to me, my great grandfather, Timothy Eaton.

Retail rivals for many years, the HBC and Eaton's neither gives nor expects any quarter so I was happy that Anne Morton had such a balanced review of Joy Santink's fine business history, but like Anne Morton "I feel a pious obligation to correct . . ." a grievous error first made by Houston and Smythe in their book which is then quoted as fact in Morton's review.

Timothy Eaton's statue in the Toronto Eaton Centre Store is not on the fourth floor in an obscure nook but occupies a prominent place on the main floor at the main entrance on the main aisle of the store. His foot is polished as never before by thousands of people not only of Irish descent. The duplicate statue is on the main floor of the Winnipeg store where it has been since I can remember it.

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Fredrik S. Eaton,
Toronto, Ontario.

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Middleton on the Map

Recently our Deputy Minister, Bruce Howe, was reading your article "The Forgotten Explorer" [*The Beaver* August/September 1990]. He drew to our attention your statement that Captain Christopher Middleton's name is not represented on the map of Canada.

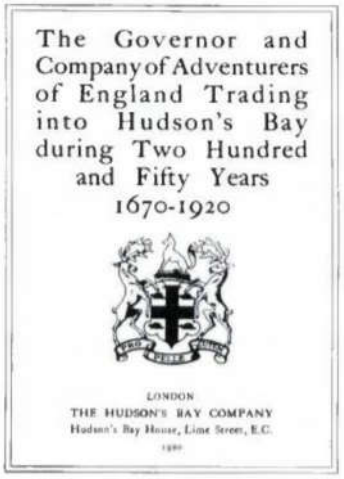
Until 1984, naming features in the Northwest Territories was the responsibility of the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; since 1984 this activity has been taken over by the Government of the N.W.T. However, in 1982 Lyle Hammond, then the representative for the N.W.T. on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, saw fit to commemorate Christopher Middleton for his contribution to our knowledge of the Canadian Arctic.

"Cape Middleton" was approved for a feature on the north coast of White Island, at the northerly end of Roes Welcome Sound. At such time as 46 K is updated, Cape Middleton should be named on the sheet. The official approval date is October 28, 1982 and the coordinates recorded in the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base are 66° 01" - 85° 07' 10".

I hope you will feel, that at least in a small way, we have contributed to the recognition of this master mariner who made such careful and accurate observations and surveys.

Helen Kerfoot,
Executive Secretary,
Energy, Mines and Resources,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Editor's Note:
Professor William Barr of the University of Saskatchewan first submitted his article on Middleton to *The Beaver* before the decision was made to honour the explorer with a place name in the Canadian Arctic. In its long journey toward publication the article passed through the hands of two editors of *The Beaver*. The current editor is pleased to draw attention to the formerly neglected name that will shortly appear for the first time on maps of the region he once explored.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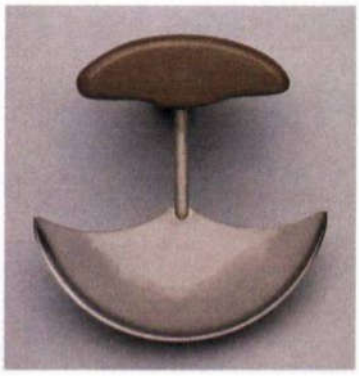

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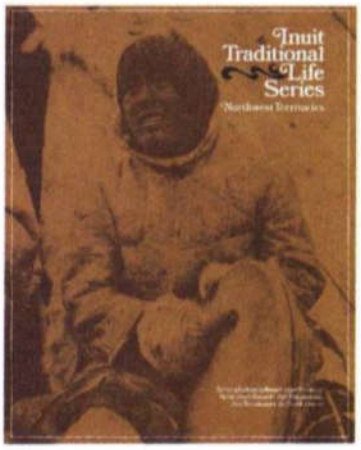

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